LITERARY CHIT-CHAT

WITH

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS

AND AN APPENDIX OF

PROSE PAPERS

BY

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ERRATA.

Page	70	Line	9	of prose, for *first* read *second.*
,,	75	,,	25	for *in the hand than in the air*, read *in the air than in the hand*, the words in italics following the word *air*
,,	81	,,	4	of the Latin, for *Jellus* read *Tellus.*
,,	85	,,	23	for *present* read *presents.*
,,	92	,,	19	for *ments* read *fragments.*
,,	94	,,	10	after the name of *Gevartius* insert *by Vandyke.*
,,	118	,,	1	for *I been*, read *I have been.*
,,	221	,,	18	for *Thomas* Warton read *Joseph* Warton.
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LIST OF AUTOGRAPH SIGNATURES.

No.		Date of Letter.
1	Horatio Nelson, ...	Jan. 29, 1798.
2	George Washington, ...	Oct. 20, 1792.
3	John Quincey Adams (said to be his last signature.)	No date
4	C. J. Fox, ...	April 29, 1802.
5	W. Wilberforce, ...	April 12, 1815.
6	Spencer Perceval, ...	June 2, 1811.
7	John Borlase Warren, ...	June 6, 1806.
8	Augustus Frederick (Duke of Sussex), . .	Nov. 23, 1807.
9	J. Kenyon, (Lord Chancellor) . . .	Nov. 25, 1796.
10	J. Laffitte, ...	April 12, 1833.
11	Sir James Mackintosh, ...	March 15, 1813.
12	William Cobbett, ...	No date
13	Charles Dickens, ...	,,
14	Capt. Basil Hall, ...	,,
15	Alexander Burnes, ...	June 8, 1833.
16	Sir Walter Scott, ...	Feb. 17, 1816.
17	Robert Southey, ...	Dec. 29, 1827.
18	P. B. Shelley, ...	No date
19	N. B. (Noel Byron), ...	Nov. 28, 1817.
20	Henry F. Chorley, ...	No date
21	Charles Lamb, ...	,,
22	W. J. Fox, ...	,,
23	Charles Kemble, ...	,,
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25	Joseph Mazzini, ...	,,
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29	J. S. Buckingham, ...	May 12, 1825.
30	Sir John Herschell, ...	Feb. 26, 1839.
31	Sir Charles Napier, (Governor of Scinde) .	Sept. 1847.
32	Lord Holland, ...	May 9, 1839.
33	Lord Metcalfe, ...	Feb. 6, 1845.

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73	F. Egerton (late Lord Levison Gower) . .	Jan. 21, 1845.
74	R. H. Horne, ...	May 3, 1845.
75	S. Rogers, ...	Jan. 18, 1845.
76	A. Tennyson, ...	Feb. 8, 1845.
77	C. Turner (late Tennyson), ...	May 1, 1838.
78	H. Hallam, ...	Jan. 8, 1838.
79	Bernard Barton, ...	May 5, 1838.
80	T. C. Hofland	Jan. 2, 1829.
81	T. Carlyle, ...	June 22, 1843.
82	W. S. Landor, ...	Feb. 1845.
83	J. Landseer, ...	Nov. 28, 1844.
84	C. A. Elton, ...	May 15, 1838.
85	H. H. Wilson, ...	No date
86	John Bowring, ...	Jan. 2, 1829.
87	C. Toulmin, ...	Nov. 19, 1844.
88	Calder Campbell, ...	April 6, 1838.
89	Mackenzie Daniel	No date.
90	B. Dacre (Lady Dacre)	June 27, 1839.
91	James Grant, ...	July 17, 1844.
92	Emma Roberts, ...	No date.
93	T. Hood, ...	,,
94	J. D'Israeli, ...	Feb. 4, 1839,
95	Lord Jocelyn, ...	No date
96	Archdeacon Wrangham, ...	,,
97	Thomas Wade, ...	,,
98	Béranger, ...	Feb 20, 1839,
99	Hazlitt, ...	No date.
100	R. Chambers, ...	May 6, 1844.

FRAGMENTS FROM AUTOGRAPH LETTERS.

1 William Pitt,
2 Sir Robert Peel,
3 Robert Burns,
4 Mr. Beckford, (Author of Vathek.)
5 Lady Blessington,
6 Mr. Martin (the painter)
7 W. L. Bowles,
8 H. N. Coleridge,

PREFACE.

The papers entitled *Literary Chit-Chat* were written at irregular intervals for a Calcutta periodical. The reader will hardly need to be told that they were produced with no toil of preparation. The matter, be its quality what it may, was always ready, and, with respect to the style, I had rarely the leisure or the inclination to bestow upon it that care which compositions of more pretension would have demanded. Some of the faults of this work, (if I do not greatly flatter my own judgment) I can easily perceive,—I wish I could as easily remove them. The chief defect perhaps, is a want of dramatic character and keeping. It was not, however, intended that these conversations, though regularly numbered, and appearing under the same general title, should have any necessary connection with each other. I had no fixed plan; so that each subsequent paper was independent of its predecessor. I had often quite forgotten what A or B, or any other gentleman of the Alphabet, had said upon the same subject some weeks or months before. Had I meditated a volume, I should have been more careful and exact. But it never occurred to me for a moment that I might be induced to collect and republish this unconnected gossip, until some friends

who had been good-natured enough to be pleased with it, as it appeared in the columns of the *Literary Gazette*, expressed a wish to see it in a shape somewhat more permanent and convenient.

An author is easily persuaded that even his least successful productions are not altogether worthless. Though painfully conscious of the many defects of this volume, I venture to express a hope, that it is not without such qualities as may possibly contribute to the amusement and instruction of more than one class of readers. If I did not think it had its redeeming points, I should of course have withheld its publication altogether. Many of the subjects handled, and the occasional specimen-extracts from admirable writers, possess a peculiar and independent interest. If no comments of mine could much increase that interest, neither could they entirely destroy it. I need not despair, therefore, of communicating some degree of pleasure to the lovers of Literature in general, and especially to those young Hindu students who are anxious to acquire a critical knowledge of recent English writers. In these conversations, in which I trust the characters of authors are fairly canvassed, they may familiarize themselves with *both sides* of many a question of great literary interest, and learn to avoid that *one-sided* extravagance of praise or censure, which is the besetting sin of our times, and which has lowered the dignity and lessened the utility of public criticism. Perhaps, too, these not wholly fictitious conversations (some of which indeed are little more than reports of actual colloquies,) might suggest to them the profit and delight of similar literary converse with their educated countrymen. If I might thus contribute, however indirectly, to raise the tone of conversation in the homes of the rising generation of Hindus, (always

to me, from my peculiar connection with them, a most interesting class of my fellow-creatures,) I should exult in a consummation so devoutly to be wished.

Though, as I have already confessed, I had no fixed plan in the arrangement and composition of the *Literary Chit-Chat*, I never wholly lost sight of one important object—an endeavour to counterbalance, as far as I could, (with limited powers and within a limited sphere) the erroneous and too prevalent one-sided system of public criticism. True criticism, especially upon poets, is so rare an excellence, that perhaps I lay myself open to the charge of presumption in attempting to settle questions, on which men immeasurably superior to myself, have come to what I cannot help considering very erroneous decisions. But the field of criticism is open alike to all men. Every man possesses the right of private judgment, and must use his faculties as he best may. It is always possible that an individual may catch certain glimpses of truth which, from a variety of causes, have escaped a more gifted vision. I have endeavored to show what can be urged both for and against an author's claims ; and, in justice to myself, I may observe that my own opinion is usually on the most favorable side, or with the most moderate speaker, though I must sometimes admit the force of objections that are advanced by the opposite party. Perhaps the reader will generally perceive to which side I lean.

I will take the advantage of the present opportunity to make two or three observations on the subject of poetical criticism. It is not prosaic-minded men alone who are bad critics upon poetry : very few poets themselves are good judges of excellence in their own art. They are generally deemed infallible as critics upon

poetry ; but it is a great mistake. They often climb the steeps of Parnassus with great facility themselves, without the power to measure with exactness the progress of their competitors. On the other hand, we sometimes discover at the foot of the glorious mountain a true critic, who, though gifted with a poetical sensibility, instead of aiming to distinguish himself by his own exertions in the art divine, is contented to admire the works of others, and who can watch with generous interest, and define with impartiality and precision, the achievements of more ambitious natures. Poets are seldom Catholic in their taste. They are self-involved, and wedded to favorite theories. If they deviate from their own peculiar walk, to judge of that of others, they feel no freshness in the air ; they see no flowers on the roadside ;—

> The disenchanted earth
>
> Hath lost its lustre.'

Thus, Wordsworth marvels how any one can recognize poetical merit in Dryden, or Pope, or Gray, Lord Byron pretended to think Milton and Shakspeare extravagantly overrated, and hinted pretty clearly, that Pope was immeasurably superior to them both. Are these obliquities of judgment the result of envy and wounded pride, or an all-absorbing self-idolatry ? Is it possible that Wordsworth, dimly conscious of his own verbosity, his solemn heaviness of movement, and his want of point, and concentration, and directness, is vexed, in his secret heart, at the universal recognition of Pope's terseness, and polish, and precision in his ethical essays, the pungency of his satires, the inimitable grace of his immortal compliments, and the light gaiety and sparkling wit of his *Rape of the Lock?* Does he wish to lower the value of those qualities which are beyond his reach ? or is he really

incapable of perceiving them? Did Byron elevate Pope, as some think that Wordsworth depreciated him—from a purely selfish consideration?—

> Fondly we think we honor merit then
> When we but praise ourselves in other men.

If Pope could be proved to be superior to Shakspeare and Milton, Byron had no need to despair of taking a place in the very highest rank of poetical genius. Byron was, indeed, a very different poet from Pope, but he did not think so himself, and probably he fancied that his *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* was something in the style of the *Dunciad*, and that his *Hints from Horace* might stand a comparison with Pope's *Imitations*. But though Byron's genius was essentially different, in many respects, from that of Pope, there were yet more points of resemblance between them, than could be found between the genius of the noble poet and that of his most distinguished contemporaries. He exhibited much of that worldly sagacity and knowledge of daily life which we find in Pope. His quickness of observation, his masculine good sense, and his simple force and clearness of style, were in direct opposition to the transcendental mysteries of Coleridge and Shelley, who wrote for poets and metaphysicians and recluse students, while Byron wrote for men of the world, and in a manner intelligible to every one. But, with all his shrewdness, the noble poet was any thing but a deep and patient thinker, and amidst all Wordsworth's puerilities, there are occasional indications of a philosophy that was beyond the reach of Byron. The latter had no fixed principles of any sort on any subject, and confessed that he was always of the opinion of the last speaker. Nothing can exceed the incon-

sistent extravagance of his poetical criticisms. In a scale of poetical merit, he elevated Rogers, not only above Moore and Campbell, but above Southey, Wordsworth, and Coleridge! No schoolboy of twelve years of age would commit so gross an error, if he had read the works of all these poets with an unbiassed mind. Byron thought two or three of Moore's Melodies " worth all the epics that ever were composed ;" that is to say, that the works of Homer and Milton are nothing to them. He considered Horace Walpole's play of *The Mysterious Mother* " a tragedy of the highest order." Coleridge described it as " the most disgusting, detestable, vile composition, that ever came from the hand of man."* Whenever Byron ventured to explain the grounds of his critical opinions, he betrayed how little he had studied the first principles of his art. Pope, he argued, was the first of poets, because his chief subject was the first of subjects—*ethics* or *moral truth* ;—on which principle, Isaac Watts was a poet of higher rank than Homer. Then, his Lordship, in the same page, contends, with a pleasant inconsistency, that the *subject* of a poet's verse is not the main point for consideration in estimating his powers, but the *execution* ;—He adds that " He

* If Byron mistook the rank of Walpole's *Mysterious Mother*, Coleridge fell into as great an error in speaking of Wordsworth's tragedy of *The Borderers*. In a letter to Mr. Cottle he says, " His (Wordsworth's) drama is absolutely wonderful. You know I do not commonly speak in such abrupt and unmingled phrases, and therefore will the more readily believe me. There are profound touches of the human heart, which I find three or four times in the *Robbers* of Schiller and *often in Shakspeare, but in Wordsworth there are no inequalities*." This tragedy has since been published. Has the public confirmed Coleridge's criticism? Has any one else seen *Shakspeare without his inequalities* in the page of Wordsworth? The truth is that Wordsworth, though a truly fine poet,—in his way the first of living poets—has not one spark of the dramatic faculty.

who *executes* best is the highest." But this unfortunate addition goes beyond the mark; for it would make the author of an imperfect, but yet noble epic, inferior in rank to the author of a perfect epigram.

It not unfrequently happens, that the best poets are the worst critics, and the best critics the worst poets. Though Lord Jeffrey has been himself most plentifully ridiculed for his ridicule of Wordsworth, he is, after all, one of the soundest critics of modern times. Yet he who knows so well how to distinguish good poetry from bad, when he criticizes the works of others, has invited the attention of the public to some very poor verses of his own.

The rich abundance of genuine talent now visible in English periodical literature reflects high honor on the character of our country. The speculations on most subjects of human knowledge in our large reviews exhibit profound study, extensive learning, and both force and subtlety of intellect. But yet, in all this noble display of our mental resources, there is, comparatively speaking, very little poetical criticism that deserves the name. In many of the essays on the characteristics of our most distinguished poets, there is unquestionably much power of composition, and much brilliant and ingenious thought. But they are too often deficient in honest and careful discrimination, in independence and impartiality of judgment, and in sober truth. Some twenty or thirty years ago, party spirit influenced the most abstract metaphysical discussions, and pure Literature, and the most delicate creations of the poet, were turned into materials of political warfare, and the most malignant and atrocious libels. The first question that presented itself to the

critic was, not whether the book under notice was a good or a bad one, but whether the author was a Whig or a Tory. As, therefore, the public knew before hand that it was not the quality of a poem, but the politics of the poet, that decided his fate, the announcement of a critique in the *Edinburgh* and the *Quarterly* on the same minstrel, if his political opinions were of a decided character, amounted to an intimation that he was to be the object of glorification on one side, and of insult, calumny, and ridicule on the other. No author could expect the least honesty or candour from a reviewer, whose politics were different from his own. People calling themselves gentlemen, and, perhaps, so deemed by their associates, no sooner seated themselves in the critic's chair, than they laid aside all the courtesies of civilized life, forgot every principle of honor and humanity, and conducted themselves like drunken disputants, or hired assassins.

This abominable abuse of the critic's privileges is happily at an end. The natural good sense and good feeling of the public, have, at last, put it down. But extremes meet. Indiscriminate laudation of popular poets, be their politics what they may, has succeeded the practice of converting literary criticism into party and personal controversy. "The life of a wit" is no longer "a warfare upon earth." The re-action is, of course, acceptable, though not exactly what it ought to be; but it will probably be some years yet before criticism shall recover its original position, and re-assume its peculiar duties, as a cool and impartial judge. At present it "no cold medium knows." It is all passion. The poets are gods—the critics are idolaters. The superstitious reverence, for example, with which all our reviewers now regard the poet Wordsworth, renders them quite

blind to defects that are absolutely offensive to the general eye, and they speak of him in terms of eulogy that would be extravagant if applied to Shakspeare or to Milton.

Wordsworth is undoubtedly a true poet, but he stands not in the highest rank. He cannot be placed side by side with the widest and loftiest of human intellects, without a most unwarrantable sacrifice of the ordinary critical distinctions. Both he and Lord Byron have a narrow range;—the one reveals calm thoughts and lovely visions—the moods of his own very peculiarly constituted mind,—and the other concentrates his intellect upon his own vehement and tumultuous feelings, and but multiplies his own image in all his dramas. It is not disputed that Byron's personal emotions are expressed with burning energy, nor that Wordsworth's best passages are enriched with profound and virtuous sentiment, embodied in elevated and perspicuous diction. But these merits, great as they are, do not include all the essential qualifications of a poet of the very highest order. It would be a critical sin of no ordinary magnitude to confound the peculiarities of these two poets, so essentially distinct; but it would sink into a venial and unimportant error if compared with the monstrous absurdity of assigning to the author of *Childe Harold* the varied powers of a Shakspeare, or to the singularly unequal, and too often verbose and feeble poet of the Lakes, the attributes of the majestic and mighty Milton. And yet, such mistakes as these are by no means rare in the criticism of the day.

Most of the younger poets of the time have had their minds built up of the very mixed materials which may be gathered

from a study of Coleridge, Shelley, Keats, and Wordsworth. No leader of a new school has yet made his appearance. For a few years Scott, and then Byron, obtained a crowd of imitators, of whom the public very soon grew heartily sick, because the external characteristics of those poets were so easily assumed, that writers of some degree of *talent*, but utterly deficient in any sort of *genius*, contrived to vulgarize them by nauseous repetition, until they became almost as offensive as fashionable songs in the mouths of street minstrels. When it was discovered that it was possible to adopt a certain tone and diction, without one spark of the genius which alone rendered them delightful, the mocking birds were silenced by general ridicule and indignation. Unfortunately, they not only brought contempt upon themselves, but lessened the attraction of the better spirits whom they had mimicked. To this day Scott has hardly recovered from the injury. Byron has suffered less severely, for the passionate energy of his Muse is now appreciated as much as ever,—not by the professional critics, indeed, but by the public at large. The periodical reviewers almost unanimously condemn him, as deficient in that metaphysical dreaminess and mystical spirituality, which are regarded as the only true signs that a poet has travelled "in the realms of gold," or breathed the pure air of the topmost heights of Parnassus. Directness of purpose and transparency of diction are now fatal objections to a poet's claims. If he be understood by the multitude, he must reckon upon being despised by the critics. Intelligibility is a fault not to be forgiven. A cloudy mysticism covers a multitude of sins. With the critics of this day a turbid stream is always deep. A year or two ago, some one published a book of verses called *Studies of Sensation*

and Event. Even Leigh Hunt, in some respects one of the very best critics of his time, recognized marks of great genius in this book, which not one educated man in fifty would pretend to understand. But he, like other poets and critics of this age, seems sometimes to entertain the notion that tranparency is shallowness, and that when a man's thoughts are enveloped in impenetrable clouds, they must necessarily be instinct with some portion of the electricity of genius. But how often the most commonplace ideas and sentiments have been concealed under a veil of mysticism! It is very true that there is a sort of clever jugglery in this deception. A man who can so invert the purpose of language as to give to simple thoughts an air of sublimity or depth, cannot be utterly contemptible in point of intellect; for words are not like the common tools of the mechanic, to be handled with dexterity by a blockhead. But this literary trickery is always absurd and reprehensible, and, though it may serve a writer's purpose to a certain extent, and for a short time, it is sure to cause him, sooner or later, to fall into neglect and oblivion. Obscurity of diction is not, however, in all cases affected. It is more frequently the result of confusion of ideas. He who thinks clearly, can always, if he will, express himself clearly. The thoughts of the most gifted philosophers are not so subtle and profound as to defy expression, nor does any writer's intellect advance so completely out of sight of his own age as to leave him in the solitude of a grandeur incomprehensible to his fellow creatures. The greatest genius of our day—let him be who he may—cannot be quite so Godlike as this. We may see his face and—*live.*

Though it has been admitted that the studied obscurity which confounds simple readers, and sometimes leads men who should know better into an over-estimate of the writer's capacity, is a sort of literary conjuration beyond the reach of a man utterly destitute of talent, there can be no question that to simplify the expression of subtle images and make depth of thought transparent is a task requiring infinitely nobler and higher powers. The exquisite clearness of Hume's *Essays* may be referred to as a proof that very profound speculations may be rendered quite intelligible even to ordinary readers, though there are people who would pronounce even these fine compositions superficial, because the meaning is naked. These Essays, though by no means to be spoken of with unqualified approbation, on other grounds, are models of transparent diction, and it is greatly to be regretted that deep thinkers in our own time should disdain to use a language which all intelligent Englishmen can read. Perhaps they are unwilling to sacrifice the enjoyment of the ignorant wonder of the vulgar, who always admire the mysticism that mocks their understanding. If certain cloudy metaphysics were rendered a little more intelligible, the critics of the day would talk less of their profundity. To eyes like theirs, an object looms largely through the thick mist, that would be contemptible in the open sunshine.

LITERARY CHIT-CHAT.

No. I.

MACAULAY AND THE POETS.

A.—You have just had an interview, I hear, with Thomas Babington Macaulay—What did you think of him ?

H.—In some respects he appeared the most extraordinary person I ever met with. His conversational powers are marvellous.

A.—My friend J— thinks him a shallow fellow, and in his grave dull way, speaks contemptuously of him "as a mere reviewer."

H.—As a mere reviewer! As if any blockhead could write a review! Such *reviews*, indeed, as appear in some of our literary periodicals, any body could write, who has no dislike to self-degradation. But the criticisms in the *Edinburgh* and *Quarterly Reviews* are generally original papers of great power, and often surpass in the same characteristic excellence the work they commend most highly and with most justice. I consider some of Macaulay's criticisms in the *Edinburgh* to be amongst the very finest compositions of that kind in our language. Perhaps Johnson's analysis of Dryden's powers is the Doctor's best performance, but it is quite equalled by Macaulay's brilliant and sagacious criticism on the same poet.

A.—I did not think you had so high an opinion of Macaulay as an author. To me he appears flippant, dogmatical, laboured—though he is not without a showy cleverness. His style is never easy and natural. He has not the art to hide his art. It is not so difficult to construct the short, snappish, independent French sentences of which he is so fond, and which are agreeable enough to vulgar readers, because they move lightly, and are unencumbered with a weight of thought. To use an illustration of Coleridge's, they have only the same connexion with each other that marbles have in a bag.

H.—It may perhaps be easy enough to compose short sentences, but it is not so easy to point them with the wit and truth of Macaulay.

A.—At all events, you must grant that he is arrogant, and self-conceited.

H.—You are thinking of the man, and not of the author. I do not suppose that a reader unacquainted personally with the writer would discover these faults, and even in private intercourse Macaulay is usually courteous and polite.

A.—I know not how you can say so. He left an impression on my mind that he despised every one but himself. He talks incessantly, and will hardly allow any one at his own table to wedge in a single word. He is overwhelming. He soon tires the most admiring hearer.

H.—He never tired *me*, either in private life or in the House of Commons, where one of his brilliant orations throws all other speakers into the shade. It is still more delightful to read than to hear them. They are so polished, so terse, and so full of close reasoning and general truths. They are the only speeches we now see in the newspapers that remind us of the eloquence of Burke. I do not mean to say that they exhibit the same fine imagination, or the same depth of philosophy or force of genius, but they have that breadth of thought and that absence of purely temporary and local detail which make Burke's speeches as readable now as the day after they were delivered.

A.—All this appears to me to be very extravagant; but I

suppose we shall never agree upon the subject of Macaulay's genius. I should like, however, to know what sort of conversation you had with him at the Albany.

H.—Oh! he talked about the poets of England—the living poets—and I was delighted to listen.

A.—What did he say of Moore?

H.—Just what every body says. He admired his wit, his facility, his fancy, and his mastery of versification, but thought him, as every one else does, I believe, too often deficient in truth and nature when he aims at a representation of our deeper passions. He said that though Moore's wit was brilliant and exhaustless, he had no humour himself, nor could he relish it in others. He was insensible, for instance, to Lamb's quiet quaint humour (a pleasant cross, as it appears to me, between Addison and Sterne,) and wondered what people could see to admire in those Essays of *Elia*, which gave so much popularity to the *London Magazine*, when it must otherwise have sunk under its own weight. That periodical soon died when Lamb withdrew from it.

A.—There were some clever fellows too upon the work. The Editor (John Scott) and Hazlitt, and Barry Cornwall, Allan Cunningham, and, though last not least—the "Opium Eater." What said Macaulay of other poets?

H.—He said Scott was a great writer,—that his poetry was Homeric.

A.—How strange is this! In my opinion there never was a verse-spinner so overrated at one time, and so justly neglected at another. Who reads his namby-pamby common-place octosyllabics now? There is scarcely one single couplet in all his poems that embodies what may be called a *thought*, or even a new image. Who ever quotes him?

H.—I have seen him quoted.

A.—Well—perhaps so—and, indeed, I now recollect having seen a few brief extracts from his poems—but what are the favorite quotations? The description in villainously halting verse of Melrose Abbey by moonlight—a passage of false sentiment about *a tear trickling to a rival's bier*, or some martial clap-trap.

Do *great* writers quote him? Has he any "thoughts that lie too deep for tears"—any words steeped in Castilian dew—any of those flashes into the interior of man's heart, which reveal more of our nature than whole volumes of metaphysics? I do not remember even in his novels, and I have read them all, and with great enjoyment too, a single observation exhibiting a profound knowledge of our nature. There is nothing of the permanent and universal in his works. He describes external manners and localities with marvellous accuracy, but he does not, like Shakspeare (to whom he has been with profane absurdity compared,) hold up the mirror to universal and eternal nature. He has shown us by his *Halidon Hill* that a man may be a first-rate romance writer and a very bad dramatist.

H.—I think you underrate him. His prose fictions have given more genuine delight to thousands of intelligent readers than any other productions of the time. They are wonderful performances. The characters, it is true, are little better than picturesque outlines, but what boundless variety of invention they exhibit! How admirable are many of the plots, and what wondrous facility, perspicuity, and animation distinguish his narrative! His prose fictions are never dull. I confess I do not think quite so highly of his verse, but yet it is always either spirited or graceful. There is an indescribable sweetness in the tone and flow of some of his softer passages.

A.—I do not think much of his plots. Too many of his most important turns of fate are in the hands of madmen, dwarfs, and beggars. He has too many clap-traps or stage tricks. How clumsy and laborious and ineffective are all his attempts at wit and humour. The jocose introductions to his novels are absolutely disgusting. Then again he is certainly one of the worst of our poet-critics.

H.—Scott was a bad critic, but not so bad a one as Byron, who always thought Gifford a writer of prodigious genius, and treated his authority with a sort of timid, nay almost servile respect, very inconsistent with his general character; for Byron, with all his faults, was in the main a manly and independent fellow.

A.—More of the bully than the flatterer.

H.—What could be more outrageously absurd than his preference of Pope to Shakspeare, and of Rogers to Coleridge, Shelley and Moore? As to his contempt for Wordsworth, it was partly affected, or he would not have imitated him in his Childe Harold. Perhaps his contempt for Southey was more sincere,

> When Southey's *read* and Wordsworth *understood*,
> I can't help putting in my claim to praise.

Southey has his faults, but at all events Byron could not pretend that it was difficult to understand *him*, nor can I believe that he had the least difficulty in understanding Wordsworth. If he had put the name of his friend Shelley in the place of that of Wordsworth, his implied criticism would have been more correct.

A.—I cannot read Southey myself. His arrogance and self-praise are intolerable.

H.—Macaulay considers him the greatest writer of his age.

A.—If by greatness be meant bulk or voluminousness, I say *ditto* to Macaulay—making one exception—that of Sir Walter Scott, who wrote wagon-loads.

H.—Macaulay thinks Rogers a writer of pretty verses, but no poet at all; though Byron foolishly places him at the top of the poetical ladder. He spoke rather slightingly of Campbell, and repeated with a sneer a passage about Murder baring her arm. It is in the *Pleasures of Hope*, I think.

A.—If Tom Campbell is not a poet there never was one. He is the only man who has ever succeeded in writing such national lyrics as an Englishman can repeat with pride. What compression—what a rich economy of noble words—what manly energetic sentiment—what taste and spirit they display!

H.—What think you of Macaulay's own verses?

A.—His *Lays of Ancient Rome* have neither imagination nor fancy, but they exhibit a thorough intimacy with the spirit of Ancient History, and are clear, animated and energetic.

H.—Poetry is not perhaps his *forte*—but yet his verses are such as any man might be proud of. It is as a Critic and Essayist that he will be known to posterity.

A.—If he should be known at all.

H.—I am glad to hear that Moxon, the Parnassian publisher, has brought out Wordsworth's poems in a single royal octavo volume, in his usual elegant style. What a treasure will this book prove to the poetical student!

A.—It may be so—to the *poetical student*—but depend upon it, it will be *caviare* to the general. The critics may puff him as much as they please, but it won't do. The public will never care a fig for him. I am fond of reading poetry aloud to others, and have generally the good luck to make them like what I read; but I have tried Wordsworth's poetry fifty times, and have always failed—it has no body—no telling points in it. Now and then there is a lacadaisical false emphasis in it, which only excites ridicule or wonder. The effect of Wordsworth's poetry is especially unfortunate because the poet piques himself on writing naturally, and not for the critics or the literati, but in the language of common men; and yet, to common men it is all Greek.

H.—I give up Wordsworth's *theory*. It is a misfortune for a poet to take it into his head to write upon any favorite system, or to subject himself to the restraint of a favorite theory. The spirit of poetry, like that of love,

> At sight of human ties
> Spreads its light wings, and in a moment flies.

The poet must trust to his natural impulses, freely and without doubt or hesitation.

A.—To be sure. Who ever wrote so naturally as Robert Burns?—and yet he had never heard of Wordsworth's theory. Peasants and princes, the ignorant and the learned, the young and the old, all felt the simple truth of his productions. His is genuine simplicity—manly and unaffected. Wordsworth's is mawkish—laboured—artificial—in a word—false, utterly false! and yet this egotistical dreamer of the Lakes has the audacity to give himself out as the only poet of *Nature*. Shakspeare and Burns never dreamed of superfine theories of simplicity, but trusted at once to their own impulses.

H.—You speak too strongly upon the subject. I am ready to

admit that Wordsworth mistook the bent of his genius when he aimed at a sort of bare and rustic simplicity. His mind is naturally solemn, elevated, and metaphysical. His best natural movement is the majestic.

A.—You mean the *stilted.* I hate the disgusting cant of criticism which pretends to place Wordsworth by the side of Milton, and to see only the ignorance and vulgar mindedness of those who cannot recognize the wondrous powers attributed to him.

H.—His *Excursion* bears little or no trace of the effect of his favorite theory. The style aims at greater elevation than is assumed by any of his contemporaries.

A.—Yes, he is pompous and inflated and self-sufficient enough in that

> Drowsy frowsy poem called the *Excursion*,
> Writ in a manner that is *my* aversion;

and indeed, the aversion of all readers who have not caught that cant of criticism of which I have just spoken. You, H——, have been spoilt by Leigh Hunt and Hazlitt and Lamb, who have all looked up to Wordsworth as to a sort of God. And yet what can Leigh Hunt mean by it—he who so admires the intensely poetical. In his secret heart it is clear enough that he thinks infinitely higher of Keats, with his "riches fineless," than of the verbose, dry, drab-suited proser of the Lakes; and if any man of taste, after plodding his weary way through the *Excursion*, can take up Leigh Hunt's own tale of *Rimini*, and not acknowledge that there is more true poetry in the Cockney than in the Laker, I will resign all pretension to judgment in matters literary. I have seen nothing in the shape of blank verse so diffuse and prosaic, so wordy wordy, as the *Excursion*, taken as a whole,—nothing so ill-conceived in respect to its plan, and so feeble in execution. It contains page after page of ordinary prose divided into the form of verse. A thing of this sort *cannot* live. It would die of *its own length*, if it were even much less feeble and affected than it is.

H.—There are no finer passages in modern verse than are contained in the poem of which you speak so irreverently; but

as one cannot *prove* the beauty of a poem to an unbeliever, I will pass by the *Excursion*, and ask you what you think of *Laodamia*.

A.—Why, I think Hazlitt talked sheer nonsense, when he said that it was a poem to be read in *Elysium*. It is, however, with all its faults, Wordsworth's best production:—but where after all does it place him in the list of British Poets? It is pleasing—elegant—classical. But had it come from the pen of Rogers, I should not have considered that it raised him many inches above his present level.

H.—This is prejudice or want of candour. The poem is infinitely above the petty prettiness of Rogers. It has breadth, dignity and high imagination, and there are lines in it that can never die.

A.—Well, have it your own way—as you begin to dogmatize.

H.—No offence. I only speak with the same decision that you do yourself.

A.—I suppose you think as highly of his Odes and Sonnets? Now if there is any kind of composition peculiarly requiring fire and force, it is the Ode—if any peculiarly requiring compression and point, it is the Sonnet; and yet these are precisely the qualities in which Wordsworth is most glaringly deficient. His Odes are as ludicrously prosaic and flat and feeble as those of Akenside, and his centuries of Sonnets, with half a dozen exceptions, are unmitigated twaddle, abruptly and unnaturally cut short at the 14th line.

H.—Is it possible that you, who have read *Dion* and the *Intimations of Immortality*, can speak in this way of Wordsworth's Odes?

A.—You have mentioned the two best, but the best are bad. His Alexandrines are the most awkward things in the world—just what Pope would have described them—

> And, like a wounded snake, drag their slow length along.

Take an example from *Dion*.

> Which Dion learned to measure with sublime delight.

Who can "measure" such a line as this, "with sublime delight?" And then what sort of verse is introduced into the lauded *Intimations?*

> And all the earth is gay;
> Land and sea
> Give themselves up to jollity,
> And with the heart of May
> Doth every beast keep holiday;—

Or, take another specimen—

> Oh evil day! If I were *sullen*
> While Earth herself is adorning;
> This sweet May-morning,
> And the children are *culling*
> On every side,
> In a thousand vallies far and wide,
> Fresh flowers; while the sun shines warm, &c.

Will you have any more? There are stores of such beauties as these in this glorious production. Here is a couplet for you—

> Not in entire forgetfulness,
> And not in utter nakedness.

Here is another—

> A wedding or a festival,
> A mourning or a funeral.

One more, and this the last—

> Not for these I raise
> The song of thanks and praise;
> But for those obstinate questionings
> Of sense and outward things,
> Fallings from us, vanishings,
> Blank misgivings of a creature—&c.

Was Donne ever worse than this? What would Gray have said to it? If he had heard this praised by any of the public judges of literature as fine Ode-writing, he would have flung his own lyre into the sea, and forsworn the Muses altogether,

rather than have run the risk of exposing himself to the Midas-like judgment of such long-eared critics.

H.—I protest against your way of selecting a line or two of imperfect composition as a specimen of an entire poem. The general character of the Ode you now quote from is truly noble. It is exquisitely thoughtful and imaginative.

A.—You will not allow me to give a single brick as a specimen of a bad house; but you are always ready enough yourself to give a single brick as a specimen of a good one.

H.—The best poets are sometimes bad, but the worst are never good. When we meet with a line or two of extraordinary excellence—of genuine poetry—we see at once what the writer is capable of:—we meet with an undoubted proof of genius; because an uninspired writer never produces such lines even by accident, though a Shakspeare may sometimes write like the meanest scribbler in existence. It is flagrantly unjust to judge of a writer by his defects only. We estimate the strength of the eagle by his highest flight—not by his lowest.



No. II.



CROLY—HUNT—BYRON—CARLYLE—JEFFREY—WILSON WAKEFIELD—CRABBE, &c.



H.—I shall never talk with you again on the subject of Wordsworth. You are quite incorrigible.

A.—So be it. I see you do not like to be opposed in your own opinions and take it for granted that I must necessarily be wrong, because I have the whole body of living critics against me; but are they not, every man jack of them, against themselves—that is their former selves? There is not one of our periodical publications of any standing that has not, in former times, ridiculed and abused the poets whom they now pretend to

idolize. Twenty or thirty years hence the stream will turn the other way again, and the herd of critics will wonder how such a feeble, egotistical sentimentalist as Wordsworth, could have maintained his ground for a single twelvemonth, especially at a time when the manly voice of Byron was ringing in the public ear and thrilling the public heart.

H.—Byron's day has gone by, and that of all his imitators—even that of the Revd. George Croly.

A.—I hardly think Croly was much of an imitator of Byron. He never aimed at the representation of the darker passions. There is something indeed like an echo of the noble poet's verse in some of Croly's Spenserian stanzas, and it is clear enough that he felt the might of Byron; but Croly is no poet. He is a writer of high sounding, hollow lyrics, and has a sort of false grandeur, a gaudiness of style, that vulgar judges often mistake for elevated genius. In all his verses there is not one touch of nature or true feeling. If you had ever seen Croly's stern, dark-browed, proud, ill-natured face, as I have done, and observed his pompous self-conceited manner of delivery, you would find it difficult to open his books with pleasure, even if they were much better than they are.

H.—My dear A—— one would suppose, from the style in which you speak of poets that do not please you, that you were the most ill-natured, most arrogant and most unreasonable of men—and really on this one point you are so—however candid and kind on all other occasions.

A.—I cannot help confessing that I am apt to have my unfavourable opinion of a poet greatly strengthened by a reference to anything unamiable in his personal character. Wordsworth's immeasurable self-conceit, and Croly's stern cantankerousness make me very little disposed to overrate their poetical merits. You have heard of course many of the anecdotes in circulation illustrative of the Laker's exorbitant and all-absorbing vanity. When one of Scott's Novels *(Rob Roy,* I think,) first came out, the new treasure was the subject of talk at Wordsworth's table. Instead of taking any part in the laudation of Scott, he went to

his library, and brought back the first volume of the novel. He then read aloud, in his usual solemn, self-applauding manner, the motto of the first chapter, taken from himself, closed the book, as if it contained nothing more worth perusal, and stalked back with it to its shelf. The tone of his prefaces confirms the authenticity of anecdotes of this nature. As to Croly, the noise his disputes make in the vestry and the newspapers, is what no other clergyman could endure without shame and self-reproach. Like Dr. Bryce, he is the fierce editor of a fierce Tory paper.

H.—I think you are mistaken about the newspaper. A friend of mine, not knowing Croly's address, but hearing that he was editor of the *Britannia*, sent a letter to him addressed to the care of the printer of that paper. Croly in his reply somewhat testily remarked that my friend's epistle had reached him "*through a printer of whom he knew nothing*;" and that St. Stephens, Walbrook, was his right address.

A.—And do you really *believe* him—clergyman though he be? Why all the world knows that the leaders of the *Britannia* are from the pen of Croly. Who else could indite such inflated, grandiloquent, bombastic Tory rot? While you are quoting letters permit me to read you one from Basil Hall, who, though a Tory himself, and a friend of Croly's, was not altogether blind to his defects as a writer. It is in this drawer with a number of other Autographs:—I have it—

Queen's Terrace, Sunday Evening.

MY DEAR SIR,

I have read your paper with considerable interest, chiefly, I believe, from knowing the able and accomplished writer. To my taste, however, the style is too stilted—too many fine words and finely turned sentences and showy images. I prefer the vigorous simplicity of the *Times*. It would be impossible to speak what is written in the *Britannia*—nobody would use such sentences in conversation, and this I hold to be one of the best tests of composition, and I rather wonder at Croly using so much eloquence to express such simple and manly thoughts.

I am, most truly yours,

BASIL HALL.

Now I ask you whether, on coupling this letter from a friend of Croly's with the internal evidence afforded by the style of the *Britannia's* leaders, you can have the shadow of a doubt as to the editorship of that paper? And yet this clergyman of the Church of England, without the courage to venture on a direct untruth, insinuates that he has nothing to do with the conduct of a Sunday newspaper, by affirming that he knows nothing of the printer. But what could be expected from a minister of the Gospel who has attempted to white-wash the moral character of George the Fourth?

H.—It is quite possible that Croly never saw the face of the printer of the *Britannia.* No one thinks the less of Sir Walter Scott for having repeatedly denied the authorship of the Scotch novels. Dr. Johnson, by no means a person of loose principles, always maintained the right of a man to keep his own secret in matters literary by a flat denial of authorship; because there really is no other way of defending such a secret from the impertinent and the curious. I have heard some men speak far more favorably of Croly, than you do, and who know him much more intimately. Whether he be a true poet or not I will not pretend to determine; but that he is a writer of no ordinary power is pretty clearly shown, both in his tragedy of *Cataline* and in his highly imaginative novel entitled *Salathiel,* in which, I think, there are many passages of very splendid writing. Say what you will, he is not an every-day author; and though he is too much of the old Tory school, and would act more consistently with his sacred profession if he did not publish Sunday politics, I have good reason to believe that he is highly respected in private life.

A.—Croly's denial of the editorship of the *Britannia* reminds me of Theodore Hook's disclaimer in the London *John Bull,* when it was under his exclusive editorship, and when he wrote almost every line of original matter that it contained. If you will open that number of the *Quarterly* which is at your elbow, and turn to the article on Theodore, you will find what I allude to. Hook writes a letter to himself and answers it.

H.—Yes—here is the answer; the Reviewer justly observes that it is framed with consummate coolness:

MR. THEODORE HOOK.

The conceit of some people is amusing. Our readers will see we have received a letter from *Mr. Hook*, disclaiming all connnexion with this paper. Partly out of good nature, and partly from an anxiety to show this gentleman how little desirous we are to be associated with him, we have made a declaration which doubtless will be quite satisfactory to his wounded sensibility and affected squeamishness. We are free to confess that two things surprise us in this business; the first, that anything we have thought worth publishing should have been mistaken for *Mr. Hook's*; and secondly that *such a person as Mr. Hook* should think himself disgraced by a connexion with JOHN BULL.

Considering that Mr. Theodore Hook was when he wrote this note under prosecution for a deficiency in the Government Treasury of the Mauritius of twelve thousand pounds, and had been deprived of his office of Treasurer on account of the deficit, his passing a public joke on his own character, which could so ill bear tampering with, was perhaps the boldest stroke of impudence on record. The Clerk in the Treasury who gave information against his superior shot himself. The man's last letter alleged that Mr. Hook had offered him 25 dollars per month if he would hold his tongue, and make his escape from the Mauritius. Yet, notwithstanding all his faults and disgraces, Tories of the highest rank befriended Hook, and associated with him to the last, and clergymen subscribed to and admired and relished his Sabbath ribaldry. On his way home from the Mauritius he encountered Lord Charles Somerset, then going to assume his government of the Cape. Knowing nothing of Hook's arrest, his Lordship said, "I hope, Mr. Hook, you are not going home for your health?" "Why," said Theodore, "I fear there's something wrong in the chest." George the Fourth gave Hook the Treasurership at the Mauritius, because he had been two or three times amused by his witty conversation. "We must do someting for Theodore Hook," he said. The salary was two thousand pounds per annum; a pretty substantial reward for

having shook the sides of Royalty, for a few hours, with puns and pleasantries. This was before Hook had edited papers and written pamphlets against the unfortunate Queen. But to return to Croly :—don't you think he is alluded to by Byron in *Don Juan* as the very Revd. Rowley Powley ?—

> Sir Walter reigned before me ; Moore and Campbell
> Before and after ; but now grown more holy,
> The Muses upon Sion's hill must ramble
> With poets almost clergymen, or wholly ;
> And Pegasus has a psalmodic amble
> Beneath the very Reverend Rowley Powley,
> Who shoes the glorious animal with stilts,
> A modern Ancient Pistol—by the hilts !

H.—Yes—I think Croly must be the person alluded to. It cannot be Bowles, who, though feeble, is not stilted. But who is the poet referred to in the stanza that immediately follows ?

> Still he excels that artificial hard
> Labourer in the same vineyard, though the vine
> Yields him but vinegar for his reward,—
> That neutralised dull Dorus of the Nine ;
> That swarthy Sporus, neither man nor bard ;
> That ox of verse, who *ploughs* for every line ;—
> Cambyses' roaring Romans beat at least
> The howling Hebrews of Cybele's priest.

L.—I suppore Milman, whose verses have been called *gilded icicles*, is the victim thus severely butchered ; *Euphues* in the next stanza is the mellifluous Barry Cornwall :—

> Then there's my gentle Euphues ; who, they say,
> Sets up for being a sort of *moral me ;*
> He'll find it rather difficult some day
> To turn out both, or either it may be.
> Some persons think that Coleridge hath the sway ;
> And Wordsworth has supporters, two or three ;
> And that deep-mouthed Bœotian, "Savage Landor,"
> Has taken for a swan rogue Southey's gander.

Leigh Hunt was wrong in speaking contemptuously of Byron

as a poet, but Hunt, though a man of true genius, entertains critical opinions that are somewhat bigoted and contracted. He can recognize only two sorts of poetry—the fanciful and the imaginative—and where there are indications of fancy and imagination no want of taste, or strength, or polish, or propriety seems to lessen his admiration in the least degree. Thus, he is apparently quite insensible of the fantastic emphasis and ludicrous simplicity of Wordsworth, of the crudeness of Keats, of the misty glare and chaotic indistinctness of Shelley, the tumid pretension and visionary extravagance of Coleridge, and the puerile affectation of the elder Tennyson. He is blind to these and all other defects in his favorites: but is never weary of sneering at the imperfections of Pope and Byron. I think he has also, if the truth were told, but a mean opinion of Thomas Campbell.

A.—A true critic, with a taste for all kinds of excellence, is more rare than a true poet. During the last fifty years we have had a good many—perhaps twenty *true poets*—but we have had no critics deserving of the name. Germany has produced *one*—Augustus William Schlegel.

H.—I think we have had three or four good critics—Jeffrey, Hazlitt, Carlyle, and Macaulay have all exhibited fine critical powers.

A.—The first laughed very heartily and contemptuously at your favorite Wordsworth; the second observed of Shakspeare's poems that he hardly knew what to say of them; the third idolizes the heaviest German mysticism, and writes in a mongrel style between English and German; and the fourth announced in the *Edinburgh* that Byron's bullying, blustering, swearing, vulgar letters, were the best in the language. Are these our greatest critics?

H.—I think they are. Did you ever read Carlyle's critique on Burns in the *Edinburgh Review?* It is the noblest that was ever written upon that or perhaps any other poet.

A.—No—I never read it. But you have raised my curiosity. I shall take an early opportunity to acquaint myself with its merits.

H.—Is not Wilson of *Blackwood's Magazine* a good critic?

A.—Decidedly not. He either idolizes or hates—he is all praise or all censure—ever in extremes:

"His generous ardor no cold medium knows."

He speaks of all living authors with a strong personal feeling either for or against. He is in every respect a party man.

H.—But he always writes powerfully.

L.—A person of the name of Stirling, afterwards employed, I think, on the *Times* newspaper, wrote some very able critical papers in Buckingham's *Athenæum*.

A.—I recollect them well—but I thought Stirling's notice of Wordsworth absurd. He gave some of the worst of the poet's infantine simplicities, and spoke of them with rapture. He informed us that there were not half a dozen men in England who understood the Laker, he himself being one of the number, I suppose. I should like to know how Wordsworth took this strange compliment. A poet who pretends to express himself in the common language of common men, and to deal with the simpler elements of our general nature, could hardly feel flattered at being told that scarcely any one understands him.

L.—I do not think Stirling ventured that opinion of the fewness of Wordsworth's intelligent admirers in the criticism we are refering to.

A.—Perhaps I am mistaken in that respect, and I am confounding what he wrote publicly with what I know he frequently expressed in society. I well recollect that at a Literary Conversazione at the house of Martin, the painter, he startled a good many plain people with this sort of nonsense about the poet who, according to Hunt, is "at the top of his profession." By the way, Byron very justly ridicules the word *profession* thus applied.

H.—Leigh Hunt, though a little spoilt by flattery in early youth, is not altogether proof against good advice. Few poets have made so many alterations in their poems at the suggestions of critics, as he has done in his fine poem of *Rimini*. He has thrown away many of the careless lines and pet phrases which

deformed the first edition, and exposed him to the bitter ridicule of *Blackwood.* The original impulse which led Leigh Hunt away from the formal Frenchified English school of verse was a noble one; but he has gone too far into the new road, and fallen into errors of an opposite description, that are scarcely less disgusting than those which he is so anxious to avoid. But I do not at all wonder at his horror of such writers as Hayley and his school, who thought mere accuracy of rhyme was the all in all of good poetry. I was dipping the other day into Wakefield's observations upon Pope's Homer, and though he generally speaks of the translator with enthusiastic admiration, he is dreadfully shocked at his occasional false rhymes. He instances the rhymes in a couplet from the Odyssey, which seem particularly to have excited his indignation—

> There o'er my hands the living wave I *pour*,
> And Heaven and Heaven's immortal thrones *adore*.

He observes that these rhymes are "insufferably barbarous." If he had looked into a pronouncing dictionary for the word *pour*, he would have found that the reader is directed to pronounce it *pore*, which is surely not a bad rhyme to *dore*. Perhaps Wakefield pronounced it *power*. Our language is not so rich in rhymes, that we can afford to be as squeamish in the use of them as Wakefield would have us be, unless we are willing in every second or third couplet to sacrifice the sense to the sound. His ear was sadly distressed by another couplet

> The trembling priest along the shore returned,
> And in the anguish of a father mourned.

He proposes to get rid of these imperfect rhymes, and to read—

> The trembling priest along the shore *recedes*,
> His breast with all a father's anguish bleeds.

Can anything be more affected and abominable than this? The priest *recedes* along the shore!

L.—Bah! It is this sort of false accuracy—false in the spirit, though correct in the letter—true to the ear, but false to the

soul—that has driven Hunt and others into such a reckless and unfinished style, and made them so eager, in their disgust at trivial rules in non-essentials, to rush out of the common road, and snatch at those graces only that are beyond the reach of art. Wakefield's pronunciation of the word *pour* (power) is as bad as Goldsmith's Irish criticism of a poet, who had made *key* rhyme to *be*. He thought it a good joke to say "let *key* be called *kee*, and then it rhymes with *be*."

A.—We cannot arrive at any very certain conclusions on the subject of pronunciation from Pope's rhymes, which were frequently so grossly inexact, that Swift, who was a very careful rhymster himself, used to remonstrate with him for setting so bad an example. I suspect, however, that in Pope's time the *l* in the word fault must have been silent, or he would hardly have rhymed it with *thought*.

> We know there are to whose presumptuous *thoughts*,
> Those free'r beauties e'en in them seem *faults*.
>
> Before his sacred name flies every *fault*,
> And each exalted stanza teems with *thought*.

Dryden also adopts the same rhymes:—

> I who have all the while been finding *fault*
> E'en with my master, who first satire *taught*.

And Sheffield, Duke of Buckinghamshire, says—

> Yet modern laws are made for later *faults*,
> And new absurdities inspire new *thoughts*.

H.—You may come down much later with your examples. Take Goldsmith;—

> Yet he was kind, or if severe in *aught*
> The love he bore to learning was in *fault*.

Indeed you may refer to a writer who died but a year or two ago—Charles Lamb, who adopts the same pronunciation of the word fault, in some doggrel lines addressed "*To an infant that died as soon as it was born.*"

> Just when she had exactly *wrought*
> A finished pattern, without *fault.*

The lines were published in the Gem, a literary Annual, for 1829, edited by Hood. They are not in Lamb's collected works, I think. Here is an amusingly absurd couplet from the same poem—

> Mother's prattle, mother's kiss,
> Baby fond thou ne'er wilt miss.

The *fondness* or affection of a child that died as soon as it was born must have been inexpressibly passionate and profound.

A.—It is strange that a man like Lamb should be guilty of such wretched stuff; as to his dropping the *l* in fault, it must have been purely the repetition of an old poetical license. He could not have supposed that the word was thus pronounced in his own times.

H.—Talking of the pronunciation of particular words, according to poetical authority, what think you of Kemble's obstinacy respecting the word *aches?*

A.—He was both right and wrong: as a critic he was right, as an actor he was wrong. He ought not to have persisted in such a trifle against the judgment or prejudice of his audience. It was pedantry and presumption. An actor must speak the language of his day, and not go back to past times for rules of pronunciation. It is quite true that Shakspeare made the word *aches* a dissyllable. So even did Butler; in a not very decent couplet he makes it rhyme to *catches.*

H.—But Dryden, in his school production on the death of Lord Hastings, pronounces it *akes*—

> Must then old three legged grey-beards, with the gout,
> Catarrhs, rheums, *aches*, live three long ages out?

A.—To return to Hunt and his School:—I could forgive the bold irregularities of their own style if they did not judge so harshly of their more careful contemporaries. Byron and Thomas Campbell contrive to combine art and nature, and are at once spirited and correct. Byron writes "*all like a man*"—and so

does Campbell. Their admirers are not obliged to explain their meaning, or to defend them from the charge of inaccuracy or affectation. They are never verbose or vulgar. They have no prosaic drivelling, no pompous emphasis upon trifles—no twaddle. They have a masculine directness of purpose, and do not pretend to an ecstatic inebriation on the plain bread and water of daily life. Their readers can sympathize with their emotions and understand their thoughts. The man of true genius is not he who is conversant with his own egotistical nature only, but he who can force his way into the hearts of others, and whose passions differ not in kind but in degree, from those of his fellow men. Shakspeare felt more intensely, but not differently from mankind in general.

H.—I am afraid we cannot fairly mention Shakspeare's name in any discussion relating to the merits of the writers of this century. It is the heaviest stone that you can fling at the stoutest scull. Shakspeare was a giant; and though individual pigmies may be proud of their strength and stature amongst the people of their own race, they dwindle into pitiful and ludicrous insignificance as soon as they are brought into comparison with Titanic natures. Let us compare living or late writers with their own contemporaries, but not with Shakspeare. I used to think the "Great Hill" of Penang, a noble mound of earth, and was delighted to look down from its highest point on the diminished town and trees upon the plain;—but, then, I never compared it with the Himalayeh mountains. I loved it too well. There is something in the poetry of Goldsmith which pleased me in my boyhood, and which is scarcely less pleasing to me now; but, much as I appreciate its gentle melodies, I cannot thoroughly enjoy them when people force upon my notice their "odious comparisons." It is an injustice to the poet and an insult to his admirer to dash the glowing ardor of an enthusiasm kindled by the merit of the poetry which is the immediate object of admiration, by an ill-timed and ungenerous reference to poetry of a different and a higher order. There are numberless kinds and degrees of true poetry, and we should confine our attention for the time to that

which is under our notice, and not spoil our pleasure by thinking of something different or better. Apollo's rich domains have not sky-piercing mountains only—but smooth lakes and gentle slopes, and little green nest-like nooks, and low shadowy dells.

A.—Yes, you are right enough in maintaining the propriety of enlarging the circle of intellectual delight, by cultivating a taste for all sorts and degrees of excellence, but I cannot think how a mind like yours can bring itself into a sort of sympathy with the low trivialities of Wordsworth—look at them how you will, they discover no kind of merit.

H.—Let that pass—you and I must not allow Wordsworth's poetry to be any longer a question to be discussed. Perhaps an impartial arbitrator would decide that *you* think too meanly of him and *I* too well. What think you of Crabbe?

A.—He is a clever writer—a shrewd, caustic, close observer of human life, and has mastered the ordinary mechanism of verse; but Nature never meant him for a poet. He has neither fancy nor imagination.

H.—But he has feeling and truth.

A.—He is not without such feeling as all amiable men possess; but he has not the feeling of a poet, and though in one sense the poetical must be true, it is not all truth that is poetical. Crabbe deals in truths that are no more poetical than the fact that two and two make four. His son tells us that his father was insensible to the charms of music, and could look with frigid indifference on the most exquisite landscape in the world. But yet, after all, I would greatly prefer Crabbe to Wordsworth, because he is a far manlier writer, and has a healthy and genuine simplicity about his style that is "quite refreshing," as Jeffrey would say, if contrasted with the affected simplicity of the poet of the Lakes.

H.—Surely there must be *poetry* in those verses which "obtained the praise of Johnson and Burke and cheered the death-bed of Fox"—and which were the last melodies that soothed the ear of Scott.

A.—Why, I have said before that I look upon Scott as one of the worst of critics. Crabbe's poetry was not too elevated or

refined for Johnson, over whose soul the poetry of Milton and Shakspeare passed without leaving an impression, and who had no eye for nature and no ear for music. Burke was a man of taste, but his heart was so gentle and generous that it often threw a thick veil over the defects of those whom he loved or patronized.

H.—I will not maintain that Crabbe had much delicacy of taste, or much sympathy for the sublime and beautiful; but his descriptive passages often exhibit extraordinary force and truth, and in dealing with human passion he has sometimes a manly pathos.

A.—His descriptions are literal—taken down in a note-book. What he saw with his fleshly eye never passed through his soul. It was not colored and animated with thought and passion. With all his coarse strength and good sense and literal truth he is sinking fast into oblivion. His name is now rarely referred to, and his works are still more rarely read.

No. III.

LANDOR--HAZLITT--BYRON--SOUTHEY--GIFFORD--DRYDEN POPE, &c.—CHARACTERS OF WOMEN—BIGOTRY.

H.—You were speaking the other day of the extreme rarity of critical judgment. I was dipping this morning into Walter Savage Landor's profound and eloquent work entitled *The Pentameron*, and found a passage that I think will please you. He puts it into the mouth of Petrarch, in a sort of "Imaginary Conversation" with Boccaccio. "All correct perceptions," says Petrarch, or rather Landor," are the effect of careful practice. We little doubt that a mirror would direct us to the most familiar of our features, and that our hand would follow its guidance until we try to cut a lock of our hair. We have no such criterion to demonstrate our liability to error in judging of poetry: a quality so rare that, perhaps, no five contemporaries ever were masters of it."

A.—Why yes, that is a very just observation. I think Swift made a similar one. But it is not in poetry only, but in music and painting, that there are so many "bitter bad judges," and so few good ones. In painting, especially, is the artist exposed to the blundering ignorance of both enemies and friends. I recollect Prout, when I met him one day at the Water Color Exhibition, most pathetically lamenting the ludicrous mistakes of newspaper critics, and the extreme hardship of having the public mind misled with respect to the merits of works, which have been produced perhaps by long and anxious labour, or with a facility and felicity that excited an ecstacy of self-exultation in the artist.

L.—Haydon used to make the same complaint, and, indeed, I believe that at the opening of every exhibition there is "a voice of weeping heard and loud lament," caused by the random hits of vulgar, ignorant, and self-conceited critics. The only good critic on Art that I have met with was Hazlitt, and he was always just and sagacious, whether he had to judge of a poem or of a picture.

H.—It was a beautiful remark of Leigh Hunt's that Hazlitt's criticism threw a rich light upon his subject, as from a painted window. I never read one of his criticisms on our old popular poets without turning eagerly again to their pages with a double relish. He does not merely dissect the flesh and bones; but makes you feel, in the core of your own heart, the very spirit of his author. Criticism that has this effect is worthy of the name. For my part, when I read such genuine and noble criticism, for such it is, though I think Hazlitt very inferior to Schlegel in the philosophy of his art, I cannot help wondering how such a dry pragmatical stickler for rigid rules as Gifford, should have been looked upon by any man, woman, or child in the light of a critic at all; though Byron thought him the best critic of his time. You know how Byron used to submit his poetry to him, previous to publication, when that little-minded presumptuous person used to write his "*Strike out this section,*" "*Omit the last six couplets,*" —"*Despicable stuff,*" &c. with an insolence and an ignorance

utterly intolerable, one would have thought, to such a spirit as Byron's.

L.—Gifford's critical acumen may be judged of by the fact that, in his edition of Massinger, he asserts that Shakspeare's most characteristic excellence, and the only quality indeed in which he excelled other writers, is *wit!* He informs us also that rhythmical modulation is not one of Shakspeare's merits. There is nothing worse than this in Rymer, who describes *Othello* as "a bloody farce, without salt or savor," that fills the head with "vanity, confusion, tintamarre and jingle-jangle."

A.—I am afraid that with Byron's wretchedly imperfect notions as a critic and a judge of critics, was mingled something of an author's servility towards the most popular dispensers of fame. He was always ready to flatter Jeffrey as well as Gifford.

H.—Byron was a bold and generous man, who could both avenge and forgive an injury.

A.—You allude to the review of his *Hours of Idleness*, and his handsome expression of forgiveness and good will in his *Don Juan*. Oh! that was not Jeffrey's review, though Byron thought so. There is not a line in it that bears a mark of Jeffrey's style. It is now pretty generally attributed to Lord Brougham, who is of course, not very anxious to confess its authorship. You talk of Byron's readiness to forgive. Did he ever forgive Southey?

L.—Did Southey ever forgive *him?* Did he ever show a disposition to subdue his pitiful rancour towards him? I must say that Southey's spleen towards Byron, under the pretence of Christian zeal, was the most hideous exhibition of envy, hatred, and all uncharitableness that is to be found in the annals of literary warfare in any part of the world.

A.—Why, it is quite demoniac. How shockingly inconsistent with the creed which they profess, are the conduct and feelings of too many of those who are esteemed particularly orthodox and devout. I have often made the remark that if Christianity seems generally to increase and mellow the charity of a man benevolent by nature, it also makes the haughty and intolerant a thousand times worse. Every one knows but too well what a *proud priest*

is—every one understands how much of ill-will and bitterness of heart is connected with bigotry the most sincere.

L.—What especially grieves and vexes me is to see women called pious, peculiarly prying, scandalous, and spiteful. They set down all their neighbours' faults in a note-book, to cast them in their teeth on the first favorable opportunity. After rising from their knees they pump secret histories out of servants.

A.—Yes, and with what malignant and ill-concealed triumph they insult with their scorn, or still more with their self-exultant pity, the unfortunate of their own sex! I think you generally find the "pious" male somewhat more generous than the "pious" female.

H.—It is melancholy, indeed, that it should be so, for woman is naturally gentle-hearted and forgiving. I would not wish to exist in the world if woman left it. It would indeed be, as Campbell has it, a world without a sun. I care comparatively little for my own sex. Man is a cold and selfish animal. When misfortune overtakes me, and the world grows black before my face, I have but one resource—the sympathy of woman.

L.—I agree with those philosophers who maintain that there is no such thing as a purely platonic friendship between the sexes. The difference of sex is never wholly without its effect upon the mind. There is always a secret consciousness of it—a secret reference to it. But this instinct is not necessarily sensual or impure. Far from it. When a man fondles a pretty little girl of eight or ten years of age, or even less, there is always a tenderer feeling excited than in playing with a boy of the same age. The living miniature of a woman, the little bud of beauty, does not indeed stir the depths of the soul with the passion which her maturer charms may inspire; but yet she touches the heart in a way in which no male creature can.

H.—Is there not something *feminine* in all objects that excite *tenderness?* We can hardly be said to feel *tenderly* attached to things of strength and power, or to anything independent of our aid and protection; and our feelings towards our own sex partake more or less of true *tenderness* as the objects of our affection

approach, in appearance and condition, to the gentleness, or beauty or helplessness of woman. Manliness wins admiration but not love. I am not sure that the imagination does not sometimes play us false in this respect, and make us, in our admiration of feminine qualities in an object, confound or change the sex, and fill the mind with associations proper to the female gender. We are thus carried away from the reality even in relation to inanimate things when they are connected in any way with our gentlest affections. A British Tar's attachment to his own ship is almost a sentiment of love. He talks of *her*, as he would talk of his sweetheart. Cooper, in his novel of the *Pilot,* makes Long Tom Coffin lament over the loss of his vessel as a lover over the loss of his mistress, and makes him declare that he will not survive her. Long Tom keeps his word.

L.—No man ever loved woman more passionately or more purely than I do; for I think it is only in that sex that unselfish, genuine and enduring friendship is to be found. But this very feeling in favor of the fair sex makes me more alive to the defects of individuals amongst them. If I meet with heartlessness in a man, and find him attending the funeral of an old friend at 6 o'clock in the afternoon, and dancing the Polka in a ball-room two or three hours after, I am rather disgusted than surprized. If it occasion any degree of astonishment it is not so much at the want of feeling exhibited by such a proceeding, as at the want of decency. It is a breach of propriety—a conventional irregularity. If the man who had just come from the funeral of a friend, instead of dancing the Polka in public were merely to toss off a bottle of claret in private, and give vent to his unchecked hilarity in a jest or a hearty laugh, nothing would be said or thought of it. A certain hardness and coldness in a man surprizes no one. It is a thing of course. It is the nature of the beast. But I own I am shocked when I recognize the same qualities in a *woman*. The incongruity is glaring. And yet, I grieve to say, that I have met with more than one case of this kind. I knew a pretty and very lively woman, who attracted about her a crowd of admirers. I was one of the

train for a brief season, until I found that there was no sort of inconvenience or loss to which she would not put her followers, if such sacrifices were essential to the gratification of the most trivial of her wants or whims. Now a man, who has the right feeling towards the fair sex, has a pleasure in affording proofs, at his own cost, of the ardour and sincerity of his regard, when his duties are not rendered unnecessarily trying and are not imposed upon him by an unfeeling, ungrateful, reckless vanity, or disgusting selfishness. A gentle and generous appreciation of his efforts to please and serve is all he asks. But an exacting selfishness, and a cold indifference on the part of the lady, is more than most men can endure for any length of time. The brilliant but cold-hearted lady, now present to my mind, would seem very charming to the stranger while she rattled on with her lively nonsense, and was satisfied with his attentions. But let the weary hand forget to waive the fan for her, let the aching head lose its fertility of ingenious compliment, let sadness and sickness interrupt the first promptitude of her admirer's attendance on all her petty wants, and a change steals over that beautiful countenance, and the whole manner becomes frigid and unconcerned;—the spell dissolves. She who seemed formed to charm and soothe us, and to render earth a paradise, appears in a very different character, and presents a woman's face with a man's heart. If any one thinks me a man-hater he is much mistaken. I do not hate men; neither do I love them. I know that they can do generous things and can sometimes show real warmth of feeling. But their impulses of this sort are sudden and uncertain, and the tenderest and holiest feelings—those feelings which I consider more peculiarly feminine are not to be calculated upon. The most worldly considerations of the most trivial nature bring the instinct of masculine selfishness into active operation.

H.—I have never myself met with a hard-hearted woman. The fair sex are the same in all parts of the world. How beautiful is Ledyard's testimony.—"To a woman I never addressed myself in the language of decency, without receiving a decent and friendly answer. If I was hungry or thirsty, wet or dry, they did not

hesitate, like men, to perform a generous action; in so free and kind a manner did they contribute to my relief, that if I was dry I drank the sweetest draught, and if hungry I eat the coarsest morsel with a double relish." Nor is the exclamation of the poet less true than the grateful compliment of the traveller.

> Ah Woman! lovely woman! Nature made you
> To temper man—we had been brutes without you.

A.—Woman is tender-hearted, I allow, but is she always or often large-minded and liberal? Can she in any case, for instance, separate crime from the criminal, and hate the sin yet love and pity the sinner. A man of a philosophical turn of mind looks upon all crime as a hideous error—rather as a misfortune demanding his utmost sympathy or regret, than as a provocation demanding vengeance. But when you hear women speak of an erring sister, you would suppose they had received some personal injury of the most awful magnitude. It is truly disgusting. I hate, with all my heart and with all my soul, these pious cats—these praying spit-fires—these godly viragos,—though no one can love a *true Christian* more sincerely than I do. But who can help loving any being whose soul is steeped in the loveliness of of such a religion as Christianity? Was there ever an infidel or a sinner of any sort who really hated the character of Jesus Christ? I cannot believe it possible. Men do not sin from the love of sin for its own sake, or from hatred of good, but either from a blindness to their own real and best interests, or from that weakness of mind which renders them unable to resist the force of temptation. Even in matters that have no reference to morality or religion, they frequently sacrifice their own greatest interests for some slight immediate gratification. When a man, for the sake of some present enjoyment, throws away a fortune, and leaves the rest of his life to beggary and discomfort, it is not that he is in love with these evils, and deliberately prefers them to competence and ease—but that he has not the power of self-restraint. All sin is a melancholy mistake or a still more melancholy weakness--in either case demanding the pity of persons blessed with greater wisdom or a greater controul over their passions.

L.—Pope understood well the character of the class of women we have been speaking of. Don't you recollect the inhabitants of the Cave of Spleen?

> Here stood Ill-nature, like an ancient maid,
> Her wrinkled form in black and white arrayed;
> With *store of prayers* for mornings, nights, and noons,
> Her hand is filled—her bosom with *lampoons.*

A.—Ah! the little minstrel of Twickenham was a splendid fellow after all, though Byron has over-lauded him.

H.—You are decidedly wrong, A. in saying that women cannot love the sinner while they hate the sin. Do you recollect Moore's beautiful song?

> Oh! what is love made for, if tis not the same
> Through joy and through torment, through glory and shame?
> I know not, I ask not, if guilt's in that heart.
> I but know that I love thee whatever thou art.

A.—It is clear that the lady loves the sinner, but does she hate the sin?

H.—Let us hope so. To turn again to Pope. I think it can hardly now be a question whether he was a poet or not, though it is still open to all critics to consider in what rank he is to be placed. Of course, no one who knows what poetry is, would put him on an equality with Shakspeare or Milton; but I sometimes doubt whether he did not surpass his master Dryden.

A.—Oh no—never! Dryden always wrote with easy force, and with a manly unaffected precision. There was too often something petty and effeminate in Pope.

L.—Perhaps Dryden had the more vigorous understanding, but Pope had the greater genius. Dryden's claims as a poet somewhat puzzle me, for he possessed in a comparatively limited degree the peculiar powers of a poet's mind. He had little imagination, little fancy, little pathos—Pope had much of all three.

A.—But in Dryden there was an earnestness and force that supplied their place. There seems to be an order of poetry

which has never been distinctly recognized, and which is produced by the mere concentration of vigorous mental powers. Dryden's poetry is at the head of this class in later times, though if we go back a little, we shall place Ben Jonson on the throne of the poetry of strong thinking; as we place Shakspeare at the head of those poets who do not address themselves directly to the understanding, but reach it through the imagination and the affections. Unimaginative but shrewd didactic poets and mere satirists in verse, and such writers as Dr. Johnson, may be fairly placed in the school of Ben Jonson and Dryden.

H.—I think your view of this subject a novel one. If acted upon it would enable us to rank several writers in the list of true poets who are now regarded as mere versifiers. You might add Crabbe to your list.



No. IV.



LANDOR—BYRON—HOOD.



H.—I am glad to see that the *Edinburgh Review* does justice to Walter Savage Landor's numerous writings, of which a compressed and complete edition has just been published. I heard long ago that this book was in contemplation, and that it was not superintended by the author, but by a friend, who was extremely anxious that Landor's productions should have the advantage of appearing in a form that combines elegance with cheapness.

A.—It strikes me that the praise of the Reviewer is too lavish, and that the article was most probably written by the very man who edited the book.

H.—If I thought with you that the praise was overdone, I might give in to your suspicion; but my own judgment exactly echoes every good word of the critic, and I have no reason to

distrust my judgment in this particular, for the first men of these times are amongst the admirers of Landor.

A.—You know that Byron thought but little of that "deep-mouthed Bœotian."

H.—I do not know that Byron *thought* little of him. He sneered at Landor, because Southey praised him. "Of the author of *Gebir*," said Southey, "I will only say that to have obtained his approbation as a poet, and possessed his friendship as a man, will be remembered amongst the honors of my life, when the petty enmities of this generation will be forgotten, and its ephemeral reputations shall have passed away."

A.—That is a high compliment, indeed, from a man like Southey, who, with all his faults and foibles, was a man of genius, and of high moral character too, if we except his somewhat too fierce intolerance of any difference of opinion in politics or religion.

H.—And yet Southey was the warm and intimate friend of many years of Taylor, of Norwich, an avowed sceptic in religion. With respect to Landor, you are, I suppose, aware that Wordsworth once paid him the compliment of imitation; perhaps, you do not recollect Landor's description of a sea-shell in his *Gebir*?

A.—Like Byron, I must admit that I never read the poem; but I think I have seen the passage you allude to quoted somewhere. I have but a faint recollection of its character. I remember that Wordsworth has been charged with the imitation you speak of.

H.—Well, here is the passage in Landor, and I will follow it up with the imitation:

> But I have sinuous shells of pearly hue
> Within, and they that lustre have imbibed
> In the sun's palace porch; where, when unyoked,
> His chariot wheel stands midway in the wave.
> Shake one, and it awakens; then apply
> Its polished lips to your attentive ear,
> And it remembers its august abodes,
> And murmurs as the ocean murmurs there.

Now here is Wordsworth's. It is more elaborate, and, perhaps, upon the whole, more beautiful; but Landor has the merit of the original thought.

> "I have seen
> A curious child, applying to his ear
> The convolutions of a smooth-lipped shell,
> To which, in silence hushed, his very soul
> Listened intensely, and his countenance soon
> Brightened with joy, for, murmuring from within,
> Were heard sonorous cadences! whereby
> To his belief the monitor expressed
> Mysterious union with his native sea.

A.—Well—though I am not one of Landor's admirers, I must be candid enough to say that I differ with you in your preference of Wordsworth's lines. The thought in the Laker is not merely expanded but diluted.

H.—Perhaps, after all, you are right. Landor is more condensed and spirited. By the way, you would be well pleased with the blank-verse of *Gebir*. It is vigorous and varied, and discovers a learned ear. Though the story is vague and ill-developed, the verse teems with the imagery of a true poet. I will give you a few chance specimens as I turn the leaves hurriedly:

> Go, but go early, ere the gladsome hours
> Strew saffron in the path of rising morn;
> Ere the bee, buzzing o'er flowers fresh disclosed,
> Examine where he may the best alight
> Nor scatter off the bloom; ere cold-lipped herds
> Crop the pale herbage round each other's bed.

The epithet *cold-lipped*, applied to herds at early morn, is excellent, and worthy of the author of the *Seasons*.

> He listened; and on her his eyes intent
> Perceived her not; and now she disappeared:
> So deep he pondered her important words.

The representation of the intent eye, blinded by the more intense activity of the sense of hearing, is fine and true. Here is another beautiful passage. Observe the variety of the pause and the neatly turned close.

> Here some observed
> Religious rites, some hospitality:
> Strangers, who from the good old men retired,
> Closed the gate gently, lest from generous use,
> Shutting and opening of its own accord,
> It shake unsettled slumbers off their couch.
> Some stopped revenge athirst for slaughter, some
> Sowed the slow olive for a race unborn.
> These had no wishes; therefore, none are crowned:
> But theirs are tufted banks, theirs umbrage, theirs
> Enough of sunshine to enjoy the shade,
> And breeze enough to lull them to repose.

Hear is a sketch of a hyena. How exact and spirited are the few brief touches.

> At human step
> The fierce hyena, frighted from the walls,
> Bristled his rising back, his teeth unsheathed,
> Drew the long growl, and with slow foot retired.

A.—Upon my word H——, you'll make me a convert to your faith in Landor's genius. These are really fine passages.

H.—I particularly call your attention to Landor's blank verse; because some of our best writers use this measure weakly, not always from want of strength, but sometimes from want of care. Look, for instance, at Byron's blank-verse in *Cain*. Here is an example—

> *Lucifer.*—I show thee what thy predecessors are,
> And what they were thou feelest, in degree
> Inferior as thy petty feelings *and*
> Thy pettier portion of the immortal part
> Of high intelligence and earthly strength.
> What ye in common have with what they had
> Is life, and what ye *shall* have—death: the rest
> Of your poor attributes is such as suits
> Reptiles engendered out of the *subsiding*
> Slime of a mighty universe, crushed *into*
> A scarcely yet shaped planet, peopled *with*
> Things whose enjoyment was to be in blindness—
> A paradise of ignorance, from *which*
> Knowledge was barred as poison.

How "harshly" these lines "grate upon their hinges"! What miserably feeble terminations! But there are worse in *Werner*. Byron handled every form of English versification more successfully than blank-verse, which, however, is the pride of our language. His mastery of rhymed verse in the *Don Juan* stanza was quite marvellous.

A.—And he sometimes succeeded, I think, in blank-verse, too; parts of *Manfred*, and *The Dream* are very admirably versified, and many of the lines, especially in the latter, have that free vibration of which he is thought by some critics to have afforded but few examples. With respect to *Werner* and *Cain* they were both hurried productions, though the latter has been described as particularly elaborate. "But what *does* Jeffrey mean by *elaborate?*" asks Lord Byron in one of his letters,—"Why! they (parts of *Cain*) were written as fast as I could put pen to paper." *Werner*, as you say, bears still stronger internal evidence of carelessness. Campbell, or one of his assistant reviewers, quotes a passage with lines ending in *ifs*, *ofs*, *buts*, and *ands*: observing that if that be poetry, he was wrong in taking Byron's preface for prose, as it would run on ten feet just as well. He puts a sentence or two of the preface into *Wernerian* blank-verse—

> Some of the characters are modified
> Or altered, a few of the names changed, and
> One character, Ida of Stralenheim,
> Added by myself; but in the rest the
> Original is chiefly followed. When
> I was young (about fourteen, I think,) I
> First read this tale, which made a deep impression upon me.

But bad as Byron's blank-verse may be occasionally, I could select from Wordsworth passages infinitely worse, though critics talk with rapture of the Laker's unrhymed versification and blasphemously compare it to Milton's—that is to say, they compare the weakest verse in the language with the very strongest. Milton is never feeble, though he is sometimes a little rough and pedantic in his bold inversions and harsh elisions. But, to return to Landor,—very few people can say that they have seen a

copy of *Gebir*. Had it any success at all on its first appearance?

H.—Very little with the public—a great deal with the literati. It was published anonymously in 1798, when the poet was in his twenty-third year; but he had also published a small volume of poems about five years before. Considering that Landor is a wealthy man, it is pleasing to contemplate his literary industry. Dr. Johnson always used to think that no man would labour who was not compelled. But Landor could afford to spend £ 70,000 on the improvement of an English estate, which after all he deserted, because he was dissatisfied with the conduct of his tenants and neighbours. In his indignation, he levelled to the ground a beautiful house upon his improved estate, and went to live in Italy, where he remained for many years. He now resides at Bath.

A.—He seems to have all the waywardness and impetuosity attributed to genius. He is a sort of prose Byron. If he is known to posterity it will not be for his poetry.

H.—I think his *Gebir* his best poetical effort: though Landor himself, I believe, considers it his worst. I am half afraid that he has directed his editor-friend to exclude it from the collected works. If it be so, I shall set a double value on the copy I possess.

A.—The last number of the *Edinburgh* has a critique on another eminent man, and, in my opinion, the author reviewed is as much underrated as Landor is overpraised. I allude to the critique on Hood, who was really what Landor himself called him "an extraordinary writer." He was the prince of punsters; but it is an egregious injustice to look upon him as a punster only. He had true poetry in him, and quite as much pathos as fun. The reviewer's examples of Hood's best serious style are lamentably ill chosen.

The papers have just published the last note poor Hood ever wrote; it is singularly characteristic of the man. It was addressed to Dr. Moir, the Delta of *Blackwood's Magazine*:—

13th March.

Dear Moir,

God bless you and yours, and good by. I drop these few last lines, as in a bottle from a ship water-logged, and on the brink of foundering—being in the last stage of dropsical debility; but, though suffering in body, sane in mind; so without reversing my union jack, I await my last lurch. Till which, believe me, dear Moir, yours most truly,

Thomas Hood.

There might appear in this, to some minds, an unseemly levity, but it was almost impossible for Hood to avoid associating incongruous images. To speak as he himself might have spoken, the grave itself was not to him in all points of view a *grave* thing. With him, there was not even one step between the sublime and the ridiculous.

B.—And yet, this implied no absolute deficiency of solemn thought or earnest feeling. Far from it. Even the gravest natures have been gifted with a fine sense of the ludicrous, and pathos and humour are often exhibited in equal proportions by the same writer. Indeed, Hood was himself a striking instance of an author being favored by nature with this double gift, though his extraordinary success as a humourist threw his nobler qualities into the shade, and caused them to be overlooked or under-rated. Any one who studied the face and general manner of Hood, would have concluded that he was rather of a melancholy and pensive, than of a joyous temperament; and in reality, his predominant character was by no means hilarious, though it would be difficult to persuade the public that an inveterate punster can be a solemn-minded man. In society, he was the reverse of a droll. He rarely or never set a crowded or public table in a roar, though, with a dry gravity, he would occasionally, in a small social party, startle those who had almost forgotten his presence, with a joke or pun that was worthy of his powers. He was a wit in his books but a very serious personage at his parlour fire.

A.—There was a similar contradiction between the public and the private character of Liston, the celebrated comedian, who after convulsing a whole audience with merriment, returned to

his own home as lugubrious as a methodist parson or a sentimental tailor.

H.—Hood was vexed to find the public comparatively insensible of his higher faculties, and it gave him infinitely more pleasure when some of his graver efforts touched the hearts of his readers, than when his quaint and clever jokes threw them into fits of inextinguishable laughter. That his last effusion—a sort of farewell letter—an adieu to mortal friendship, should have been sprinkled with witticism, will be regretted by many good men; but those who take a philosophical view of our strangely-compounded being, and recollect how often the ruling passion of the wisest men is strong in death—

> E'en from the tomb the voice of nature cries,
> E'en in our ashes live their wonted fires—

those, in fact, who are willing to allow others to differ, in some degree, in character from themselves, without assuming that all such difference must necessarily be criminal, will be ready to interpret this last composition from the hand of an extraordinary writer, in a charitable spirit. Under the air of levity which pervades it, it is by no means difficult to discover the gravity of mind befitting the occasion. If Sir Thomas More could jest unreproved upon the verge of eternity, there is no reason why a similar exhibition of cheerfulness should be condemned in Thomas Hood. I do not, myself, approve of this mode of meeting the awful change which all mortality must undergo; but I would not interpret unfavorably, nor too harshly censure the conduct of the man, who at the last moment, emits a few faint flashes of the light which characterized his intellect throughout his whole career on earth.

A.—Poor Hood had always wretched health and was of a hypocondriacal temperament. His countenance was peculiarly grave; he was naturally taciturn, and, even when he punned and joked, his features were very rarely lighted up with the fun that was in him. His face was not like a transparent vase with a lamp inside, but like a mask, with all the roguery concealed behind it. But he was a warm-hearted man and an excellent writer.

No. V.

BROWNING—SHELLEY—SHAKSPEARE—SCHLEGEL GARRICK.

A.—What can the *Examiner* mean by puffing Browning in the way it does?

H.—I suppose you allude to the review of his new tragedy of *Luria*.

A.—Yes, I do. You may observe that the *Examiner* has a certain set that it delights to laud. All other authors are beyond the pale. Bulwer, Talfourd, and Knowles have for some time been Fonblanque's pets, and he has lately admitted Browning into the favored circle. Those once admitted are for ever after like Kings—they can do no wrong.

H.—I cannot say that I see any thing like puffery in the notice of Browning. There can be no question that he is a man of true genius.

A.—I have not myself seen the evidences of it. The passages quoted as favorable specimens, no man could read a second time. They want passion and distinctness; it is absurd to call them dramatic. Whatever other talent Browning may possess, he cannot pretend to the rarest of all poetical qualifications—the dramatic faculty. No living writer possesses it, and it is clear that Browning does not understand what dramatic power is, or he would never, as he has done, have called Walter Savage Landor "*a great Dramatic Poet.*"

H.—I agree with you that we have no true Dramatist now living, but I am sure that you do gross injustice to Browning. He is not an every-day writer. There is originality in all his productions.

A.—*That* there may be—but it is not *poetical* originality. He would, perhaps, show himself to be a subtle metaphysician, if

he would condescend to write in plain prose, and get rid of his chaotic phantasies. Even the *Examiner* is compelled to acknowledge that his author's metaphysics are spoilt by his poetry, and his poetry by his metaphysics. This was the case with Shelley. Depend upon it, no poetry will live that cannot make itself felt by the great general heart. It is melancholy to see how much powerful talent and deep learning and ingenious thought, by being tortured into the form of verse, are lost entirely to the world. Poetry and metaphysics have been aiming at wedlock this last fifty years. But it wont do. They are utterly unsuited to each other. There is always an unostentatious philosophy in the highest sort of poetry, but not the metaphysics of the schools.

H.—If Shelley lost a world of readers by his mysticism and metaphysics, what was it that prevented Southey from being the most popular of modern poets, as he was certainly the most intelligible? He never called back his reader to consider the meaning of a single line amidst his countless thousands.

A.—I think it was the want of compression. He certainly possessed a rich though not vivid imagination. The general effect of his long poems is highly impressive. The reader is led captive, from page to page, from canto to canto, but when he comes to examine particular lines and passages, he finds nothing remarkable. Poetry of the right sort is the spirited concentration of truth and beauty: so that in a single line—sometimes in a single word—the poet throws more light upon a subject than a prose writer in fifty pages. No line, or half line, or single word of Southey's is quoted or recited. There is a fine tone (but a little monotonous) in his blank-verse, though it is too much, perhaps, the echo of Akenside's, and there is something very striking in all his longer poems but after all, one is more inclined to recognize his extensive acquirements and his general powers of mind than his poetical inspiration. You must have observed how flat and dull most of his brief occasional verses are. I would lay my life that scarcely a single one of them would gain admittance as an anonymous contribution to a Magazine of the day.

L.—By the way, did you observe in the papers a paragraph announcing that a monument had been erected to Southey in Westminster Abbey? The penny-a-liner adds to the intelligence that "it is but an appropriate compliment that this monument is placed near that of Shakspeare." It is terrible to see how the greatest of earthly names is thus taken in vain whenever a compliment is to be paid to a poet of later times. Your friend Landor says, that England has produced four men so pre-eminently great, that no name, modern or ancient, can stand very near the lowest: these are Shakspeare, Bacon, Milton, and Newton.

H.—I could point out several exquisitely beautiful descriptive passages in Southey's Epics, to which even you would not venture to refuse the title of genuine poetry, and some of his ballads are still popular. His little poem of the *Battle of Blenheim* is better than a quarto volume of sermons against the vanity and wickedness of war.

A.—Southey was a happy fellow—quite proof against all the objections of the critic, or the satirist, or the logician. He was the greatest egotist that ever lived, and never hesitated to speak of his own certain immortality as a poet. As a philosopher and as a politician he was beneath contempt. As a poet with many defects, he has his merits, but they are not of the highest order. Landor loved Southey, but he loves truth better, and would be as much shocked as any one to hear it stated that Southey was entitled to a place by the side of Shakspeare. In a note to one of Landor's dramas, the author says of Shakspeare that he was the only man that ever existed who was superior to Bacon in intellectual power.

H.—I recollect the note you allude to. It illustrates a passage in Landor's "*Essex and Bacon*," one of his "Five Dramatic Scenes," dedicated to Southey. It is very difficult to settle the rival claims of men whose intellectual powers take quite opposite directions.

L.—The papers have just recorded the death of Augustus William Schlegel, the celebrated German critic, who, in his *Lectures on Dramatic Literature*, has done so much justice to

the character of our greatest poet. Though all Europe owes Schlegel "a debt immense of endless gratitude," it is England that owes the largest share of that debt, and should be most eager to acknowledge it. It is a singular circumstance in the History of Literature that a great poet should be best appreciated and most happily interpreted by a foreigner. A prophet is said to be better estimated in any other land than his own country; but this is the first instance that occurs to my memory of a poet being more esteemed and better understood abroad than at home. The name of Schlegel ought to be a household word with the countrymen of Shakspeare. The extravagant eulogy inscribed beneath "the Harlequin figure" of Garrick in Westminster Abbey, in which the recovery of Shakspeare from oblivion is attributed to the actor, would apply with far more propriety to his great foreign critic, if we could only suppose or admit for a moment that the poet's "forms" were ever "sunk in death."

> To expand his fame
> Wide o'er this breathing world, a Garrick came;
> Though sunk in death the forms the Poet drew,
> The actor's genius bade them breathe anew;
> Though, like the bard himself, in night they lay,
> Immortal Garrick called them back to day.

For *Garrick* and *actor*, we should read *Schlegel* and *critic*, and then there might be a touch of truth in verses that are, as Charles Lamb justly describes them, "a farrago of false thoughts and nonsense." Garrick's true merit must not be depreciated; but the verse which makes Shakspeare and Garrick "*twin stars*," so outrageously oversteps the modesty of truth as to assume the aspect of a satire.

A.—When Garrick attempted to adapt Shakspeare's plays to the stage, and inlay them with passages of his own, he soon betrayed the difference between the power which enables a man to mimic the outward and visible signs of passion, and that faculty by which a great poet obtains an insight into the innermost workings of the human heart.

H.—It would be a graceful and honorable indication of the

gratitude and admiration of the English people if some statue or monument were erected in our country to the memory of a foreign writer who has paid to English Literature the highest compliments it has yet received from other nations—who has made the flippant criticisms of Voltaire on the greatest of English Poets supremely contemptible and ridiculous, even in the partial judgment of the French—and who, by spreading the fame and circulating the golden thoughts of Shakspeare over Europe, has contributed, in no slight degree, to increase the moral influence of England, and to benefit mankind.



No. VI.



THE MINISTRY—WELLINGTON—HAYDON.



A.—I am glad that you are again well enough to come abroad and that we can renew our old discussions.

H.—What highly interesting events have occurred in the brief interval!

A.—You allude to the change of Ministry?*

H.—Partly. To what a pitiful condition the Tories were reduced! They could not get rid of a liberal conservative without making way for the Whigs. They do not now even *dream* of a Tory administration. England will never be ruled again by a Tory cabinet.

A.—The Castlereaghs and Eldons have had their day. They little imagined to what a state things were coming, and into what supreme contempt their most cherished opinions would be thrown by the general advance of knowledge. Peel himself is in a curious position. He has been carried on by the stream, and on looking back to his past life must acknowledge that his mind has undergone changes as complete as those of the physical

* In 1846.

structure of man, which are said to be effected in every seven years of existence.

H.—I see not the least occasion to taunt him with these changes or to suspect him of hypocrisy.

A.—I hardly know what to think of it. It bears an awkward appearance that his changes of opinion have never occurred when he has been on the opposition side of the house, and that they have generally assisted him to keep his place in office, of which he is considered peculiarly tenacious. At all events he has always had sufficient sagacity to see which way the wind of public opinion blows, and generally to avoid bringing his craft amongst the breakers. He was a cooler calculator of chances, and more prompt to feel the pulse of the public, than any of those who were associated with him on the same side. The Duke of Wellington, with his military notions of passive obedience, thought for a long time that all that was necessary to put down public opinion was an order from the Horse Guards, and that by pronouncing public meetings a *farce*, the people would see the error of their ways. I should like to know the feeling with which such men survive the reign of despotic and narrow opinions, and find themselves in the minority as the age advances in general enlightenment. They cannot but confess that the awful evils which they considered the necessary and immediate result of all political changes in favor of the people were the dreams of ignorance. Nothing whatever has occurred that seems to fulfil or to confirm any one of their favorite prophecies and theories.

A.—I do not think the Duke of Wellington is the kind of man who is likely to confess, even to his own mind, that all the dearest opinions of his life are falsified by the history of his country; and self-deception is not difficult even in the face of the most startling contradictions in the shape of plain matters of fact. One is occasionally amused in private society with meeting a solitary Tory who does not seem at all aware of the absurdity and loneliness of his position. His mind stands stock still, and he is not in the least conscious of the rapidity with which

the rest of the world is passing by him. He repeats the old fallacies in favor of the few against the many—talks, like Lord Eldon, of the sacredness that doth hedge a king—speaks with untroubled assurance of the divine right to govern wrong, and wonders at the nonsense of the principle which makes all considerations give way to the greatest happiness of the greatest number. He is a living memorial of dead error. It is better not to think of the Duke of Wellington as a politician, but to remember what he has done for his country as a soldier. The last time I saw him he was sitting in his usual place in the House of Lords, and in his usual attitude,—his head hanging down upon his breast, his hat over his eyes, and his arms and legs crossed. He never raised his head, nor did he utter a single word to any one. When he rose to leave the House he seemed to walk feebly, and I fear that his iron constitution is rapidly breaking up. What a fortunate fate is that of this illustrious commander, who in every direction sees his own image, multiplied in bronze or marble, and reads his own life in the history of his country! He is living as it were in posterity, if the Irishism may be permitted, and is enjoying all those honors in his life-time which are usually reserved for the grave.

L.—There seems to be occasionally the same prostration of mind in politics as there is in religion, when the weight of early associations and early prejudices oppresses the judgment. I am acquainted with two or three very clever shrewd men who see all truth but political truth with great quickness. These men avow their belief in the doctrine of the divine right of kings, and their entire independence of the millions of human hearts placed at their mercy, except that they will have to answer to their God in a future life. But that in the meantime the happiness of millions should be at a single man's irresponsible disposal is a matter of no moment. So a king might amuse himself, as some French king once did, with taking shots at his people as they pass his palace—killing them with as little remorse as if they were so many birds of prey. The people have no right to protect themselves against the "Lord's anointed," for to what earthly tribu-

nal could he be called? "The king can do no wrong." Pope makes the Goddess of Dulness (in the *Dunciad*) express her extreme partiality for "Arbitrary sway," and the doctrine of the divine right of kings—

> For me if Dulness sees a grateful day
> 'Tis in the shade of *arbitrary sway.*
> O! if my sons may learn one earthly thing
> Teach but that one sufficient for a king;
> That which my priests, and mine alone maintain,
> Which as it dies or lives we fall or reign;
> May you my Cam and Isis preach it long!
> *The right divine of kings to govern wrong!*

H.—You'll observe, I think, that the Tory has only in his eye the reigning king—and a European one. The innumerable little kings of barbarous and petty states do not seem quite so sacred. Perhaps he would hesitate to talk of the divine right of one of the naked kings of the Marquesas Islands. Like all prejudiced and one-sided reasoners, the Tory keeps clear of definitions, and will not explain precisely what sort of kings are appointed by God to reign over men with irresponsible power. To return to the ex-minister,—I think you do not do him justice. He has certainly done more for his country and mankind during his last reign, than any one of his predecessors within the same number of years.

A.—That is true—but it is to his good fortune rather than to his ability that it is to be attributed. Peel is far from being a first-rate man. No Historian will place him amongst the great statesmen of England. He is clever, plausible, full of tact, and, above all, is very *pliable.* He has not the rigidity of the oak, or his boughs would have snapped long ago.

H.—He is not indeed a pig-headed, obstinate fool, that for the mere sake of a character for consistency, sticks to every opinion that he has once embraced, whether right or wrong. I know no man whom I should consider more open to fair argument against his own opinions. He is candid and modest. And do you think there is no moral courage in avowing great changes of opinion, and shocking and alienating hosts of old associates?

A.—Well—I am not disposed to run him down. He has his good points, and I like none better than his generosity and kindness to men of genius.

H.—You are thinking of poor Haydon. I have read the account of his suicide with extreme emotion. I think I see him on the floor beside his last work, with his white hairs dabbled in blood.

A.—Did you know him personally?

H.—Slightly. He was a fine warm-hearted fellow with some eccentricities. I became acquainted with him in consequence of a critique I had written in the *London Weekly Review*, on a picture he was then preparing for public exhibition—it was one of his most successful performances—*The Chairing of the Members, after the Mock Election in the King's Bench.* I will show you the first two notes I received from him—they are very brief but very characteristic.

My dear Sir,

Many thanks for your beautifully written notice; let it stand; for in one or two instances it will be as it was. But the bringing in the Lord High Sheriff in front is a vast advantage and improvement; call in about a fortnight and I hope in God to have something done of consequence.

Yours faithfully,

B. R. Haydon.

My dear Sir,

Many, many thanks for your great kindness—and, for the sake of the art, never omit elevating the broad, the masculine, and the decided over the timid, the frittered, and the petty!

You have done me great honor, and a man feels amply rewarded for all his toils and anxieties, when his labors elicit such spontaneous uninfluenced praise. May I always deserve such a reward from the honest and refined.

Yours ever, dear Sir,

B. R. Haydon.

I was gratified at having given him so much pleasure, and I preserved his little notes as records of the good will and good opinion of a man of true genius. His melancholy end has made them doubly interesting, though the interest is now of a painful nature. I recollect once seeing him in high spirits. It was at

one of the Water Color Exhibitions. He had just received from George the Fourth five hundred guineas for his picture of *Christ's Entry into Jerusalem.* I am speaking from memory, but I think that was the picture the King purchased. His majesty gave the same sum for the *Mock Election in the King's Bench.* Prout, who was standing by me, exclaimed, "There is Haydon—I must go and congratulate him." A great number of brother artists then collected round Haydon and expressed their satisfaction at his good luck.* I saw him on another occasion in his *studio,* when he called my attention to a broken plaster of Paris cast of the back of a Negro. It looked like the back of a giant. Haydon had made a bargain with the man that, for a certain reward, he should permit nearly his whole body to be enclosed in the plaster. When the plaster was over the man's breast and stomach, it became so firm, and adhered so closely to him, that he lost his breath, and nearly died under the operation. Haydon was alarmed, and perhaps began to speculate upon being hung for a murder *secundum artem.* Haydon's narrative was very minute and graphic; but so many years have since elapsed, and my memory is so weak a one, that I cannot give the exact details. I thought some rough studies in chalk or fragments of sketches on the walls of his studio, indicated more genius than his finished paintings. He had great boldness in his first rough draughts, but sometimes he found it difficult to satisfy himself. His head of Christ, in his picture of the *Entry into Jerusalem,* was very often rubbed out and repainted.

A.—It was generous in George the Fourth to purchase an historical picture, for he had no leaning towards the great style in art. He preferred the Dutch to the Italian masters.

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* Sir Walter Scott in his diary (dated May 5, 1828,) after recording that he had just breakfasted with Haydon, and sat to him for his head; expresses a hope that the artist "was on his legs again," (relieved from debt.) "The king," continues Scott, "has given him a lift, by buying his clever picture of the *Mock Election in the King's Bench prison,* to which he is adding a second part, representing *The Chairing of the Members,* at the moment it was interrupted by the entry of the guards."

H.—In Haydon's picture of *Christ's Entry into Jerusalem* he has introduced the faces of Voltaire and Wordsworth—the one full of mockery—the other of the profoundest reverence.

A.—And yet it is thought that Wordsworth is no Christian. His religion, if judged of only by his writings, is Deism. In his most religious passages he makes no allusion to Revelation. He deifies Nature.

H.—I believe this to be a great mistake, and I think I could show you many passages in Wordsworth that would quite overthrow your criticism. Blackwood's Magazine once brought the same charge against him.

A.—I did not at all like the letter of the *Hurkaru's* London correspondent, whose stern morality seems shocked at the public sympathy towards a man of genius, who, unable to support himself against misfortune, sought relief in death. No one will venture to defend the crime of suicide. It is, indeed, indefensible on every ground. But in this nineteenth century, men begin to pity the criminal, however much they may detest the crime. Even if it be true, as some think, that the man who deprives himself of life in this world must inevitably endure an eternity of torment in the next, is poor Haydon the less a subject of commiseration?

H.—The common notion that the act of suicide always indicates cowardice or insanity is a gross error. Some of the bravest and most gifted spirits that ever wore human flesh have cast it off like a cumbrous garment, and with cool deliberation, when they found it too oppressive. It is something like the old mistake that all bullies are cowards—

"The wish was father, Harry, to that thought."

A.—Men of genius are always *sensitive*. They feel the ills of life far more acutely than other people. It is awful to think of the internal struggles of such men when the world grows black before them. Calmer temperaments cannot easily conceive what agony of mind poor Haydon must have undergone before he wrought himself to his last dreadful act. But

we must not forget how many terrific storms he had endured with a manly fortitude. How touching are his own words—"*In God I trust. It is hard this struggle of* 42 *years, duration; but Thy will, not mine, be done.*" Shall we forget this 42 years of endurance by one of the most sensitive of minds? This *sensitiveness* is alluded to by Wordsworth in his friendly sonnet, and, knowing what the gifted artist had to bear up against, the poet felt the necessity of addressing the more *heroic* part of his nature; and all who knew Haydon were aware that he was not generally deficient in moral courage.

TO B. R. HAYDON.

High is our calling, Friend,— creative Art
(Whether the instrument of words she use
Or pencil pregnant with etherial hues,)
Demands the service of a mind and heart
Though sensitive, yet in their weakest part
Heroically fashioned—to infuse
Faith in the whispers of the lonely Muse,
While the whole world seems adverse to desert.
And oh! when Nature sinks, *as oft she may*,
Through long-lived pressure of obscure distress,
Still to be strenuous for the bright reward,
And in the soul admit of no decay,
Brook no continuance of weak-mindedness—
Great is the glory, for the strife is hard!

The strife was indeed hard, and more at last than he could bear.

H.—I regret extremely that the *Hurkaru's* correspondent (himself a man of genius and of fine accomplishments) should have flattered the dunces and the toilers for yellow dross by his support of the vulgar doctrine that no man should labor in an unprofitable calling—unprofitable in a trading sense. Haydon ought not to have painted large Historical pictures, he says, because there was no demand in the market for them. Really, this is quite unworthy of such a writer. On the same principle his admired Wordsworth ought never to have written so many unsaleable verses, nor Milton his *Paradise Lost*.

No. VII.

LANDOR—MARQUESAS ISLANDS—BORROW—BARRY CORNWALL—BURNS—CAMPBELL, &c.

A.—How is it that not a single copy of Walter Savage Landor's collected works has yet reached India?* Do the London providers of the Indian market feel that it is too solid food for the delicate stomachs of their Indian constituents?

H.—The London correspondents of the Indian Booksellers have felt the pulse of the Indian public, and know well the state of its intellectual health. They know what to send, and what to keep back. If Landor's Works were published in this country, I do not think a dozen copies would be sold.

A.—But the fact is, that Landor is not a *popular* writer any where. His books are *caviare* to the general.

H.—But is there not a rare classical elegance in his careful yet eloquent and energetic prose? He is one of the few original thinkers of this century.

A.—I fear that his collected works will give but little immediate profit to his publisher. It is possible, however, that they may have a tolerably good and steady sale in England, though not a quick and brilliant one. A good book there is sure to work its way sooner or later, though it may be passed by for awhile by popular trash, which has its brief day and its eternal oblivion.

H.—The only kinds of books that now seem to have a quick sale are novels and travels, and certainly, England was never richer in these departments of Literature. Englishmen never travelled so much as they do now, and, speaking generally of them, they were never before so well qualified to turn their

* Since this was written, the Indian Booksellers have been supplied with copies of Landor's Works. *Gebir* is in the collection.

travels to a good account. This is one of the advantages of the diffusion of education amongst all classes. I was reading the other day, a work on Typee, one of the Marquesas Islands. Since I devoured Robinson Crusoe, in my boyhood, I have read nothing half so interesting as this book. I forgét its title. It was written by one who went out as a man before the mast in a small whaler. He had seen better days, and must have received a good education. The wild and romantic scenery of Typee—the primitive character of the islanders—the author's hair-breadth escapes by flood and field—are all described with such eloquence and animation that this narrative of actual adventure is as charming as a romance.

L.—Is not *Borrow's Bible in Spain* also a delightful book of travels?

H.—It is—but not so interesting as the book I speak of. Borrow's adventures are somewhat monotonous, and before one has quite got through his book, there is no great disinclination to close it; but no reader could put down the work on Typee before he had got to the end.

L.—But there is a true heroism, and a manly sagacity, and a directness of purpose in Borrow, that have excited in me a great admiration of his character. He is a noble specimen of a zealous Christian—of genuine courage, with large-mindedness, and an utter absence of all bigotry. He is an active missionary, and ready at all times to suffer martyrdom in the cause of his faith; yet he is as charitable as he is clear-sighted in judging of the errors or prejudices of men who entertain opinions directly opposite to his own. Such characters are rare, and deserve to be held up to the admiration of their fellow men.

H.—He is all that you say of him. I quite go along with you in your praise of Borrow as a man, and I have read much of his work with interest and pleasure, though I was not sorry to come to the end of it. One of his two volumes would have satisfied me. His work would have been all the better for a little pruning. Nevertheless, it does him credit, both as an author and a man, and I confess, I think the Bible Society were singularly

fortunate in obtaining such an agent—so bold and determined, yet so prudent and judicious—so zealous, yet so charitable and candid.

A.—I have only just read Moxon's edition of Barry Cornwall's Songs. How wretchedly have they disappointed me, and how disgracefully have some of our London critics misled the public, on the subject of their merits. Why, if you were to believe these critics, you would conclude that Burns was at last surpassed in his own line. The fact is, that in the whole collection—a very extensive one—there is not one thoroughly natural lyric. And yet Barry Cornwall in his introduction talks with excellent judgment of the qualities required in a good song, and the absolute necessity of adapting it to the general human heart. But just imagine the futility of attempting to impress simple natures with such far-fetched and fantastic and purely artificial productions as these, which are yet intended to gratify the national taste, and raise the character of the lyrical department of British Literature. I really become more and more inclined every day to look with more and more contempt upon the poetical criticism of England. It seems to me not merely wrong—but insultingly so. What sort of compliment is it to a reader, to direct his admiration to a Donne-like conceit of the worst kind, as the very perfection of simple nature? These lyrics of Barry resemble Donne's poems in a certain glittering coldness and a remoteness of illustration, but in nothing else. Donne's metaphysical fancies though unnatural and prosaic, often indicate great ingenuity and force of mind. Barry is feeble as well as fantastical.

H.—I have not read these songs; but if they are such as you describe them to be, all the puffs of the critics will not rescue them from oblivion. I am sorry to hear so bad an account of Barry Cornwall's latest effusions,—for I read all his early poetry with great pleasure. It was elegant, fluent, fanciful, melodious and tender in a high degree. It is said that he won his accomplished and beautiful wife by his dulcet strains. She was deeply interested in the author before she had ever seen him. Some of

his Dramatic Scenes indicated a power which severe study might have brought to great perfection. At least I used to think so. But there are some intellects that are naturally brightest and strongest in their dawn, and mislead us with false promises of a vast and rapid progress. Campbell and Rogers both disappointed the world by the great promise of their earliest works. Campbell, indeed, did something better than his *Pleasures of Hope*, which has too much the air of a clever juvenile prize poem. His *Gertrude of Wyoming* is delightful; but *Theodric* and the *Pilgrims of Glencoe* were wholly unworthy of him. They formed but an unsatisfactory termination to a glorious career. The best things he ever wrote were his Battle Odes.

A.—Yes—if Barry Cornwall had written such verses as those, he might have been proud of his additions to the Lyric Literature of his country.

H.—They are almost perfection.

A.—Yes—but they were produced with an agony and bloody sweat. One is shocked to think that some four or five pages of verse should be, as it were, the concentrated essence of a man's whole soul—the result of years of labor and anxiety.

H.—Gray is the only British Poet whose works were the produce of such strenuous toil—they were indeed *works*.

A.—It is said that Rogers toiled quite as much; but he could not concentrate his faculties into any degree of strength. He is always weak and finical.

H.—His *Human Life* is his best production. There is ease and fluency in that poem, and much sweetness. How fortunate some poets are in the time and manner of their first appearance! Would Pomfret have lived two days as a Poet in the 19th century? If a poem like the *Pleasures of Hope* or the *Pleasures of Memory* were published to-morrow with a new name, it would be forgotten in a month. Many poems, indicating higher genius than belongs to these, have appeared and passed away within the last twenty years.

A.—I think if you will trace the History of the latest poets, you will find that the generality of those, who, without any hold on

the public mind have obtained a place in the list of known authors, have enjoyed the aid of some friendly critic. L. E. L., for example, was pushed into notoriety by Jerdan, of the *London Literary Gazette*, at a time when that paper enjoyed a wide circulation. Who reads her poetry now? But every body has heard of Letitia Elizabeth Landon. Her melancholy end helped to preserve her name for a time, but it will soon sink into oblivion. Who would have heard of Kirke White, but for Southey's criticisms, and his beautiful and pathetic memoir? The *Examiner* newspaper has pushed a certain *set* into temporary notice, and Leigh Hunt rescued Keats (who, however, well deserved the favor) from the neglect which originally appeared the doom assigned to him by Fate.

H.—Keats was a true poet, though I question if he can ever become a favorite with the mass of readers. Perhaps it was lucky for his fame that he died early, and left his gigantic fragment of *Hyperion* in its present state. Had he lived to attempt its completion he might have disappointed his warmest admirers. I often think that Milton ought to have left his *Paradise Lost* unfinished; the early books are so incomparably superior to the later ones. What an idea posterity would then have formed of his mighty powers!

A.—We need not wish to have a nobler conception of the human intellect than the works of Milton, as they now are, must raise in the mind of every worthy reader.

No. VIII.

CHARLES I.—GUIZOT—HALLAM—MACAULAY.

F.—Are you not of opinion that Macaulay has treated far too severely the character of Charles the First?

M.—By no means. I am, on the contrary, inclined to find fault with him for admitting, with Hallam, that it was a mistake to condemn Charles to execution. If Charles, says Macaulay,

had been the last of his line, there would have been an intelligible reason for putting him to death. But the blow which terminated his life, at once transferred the allegiance of every royalist to an heir, and an heir who was at liberty. To kill the individual was therefore to release the king. This is plausible enough; but the fact was that no middle course was left to the choice of the predominant party; and it was not the monarchy that they were determined to destroy, but the man who wished to turn the monarchy into a despotism.

F.—But the triumphant Parliament had already so reduced the prerogative, and bound the king by such solemn pledges, that in reality there was little to fear from him, and his spirit was undoubtedly much subdued by his misfortunes. No monarch had received severer and more wholesome lessons.

M.—And no man was ever less disposed to profit by them. How could they trust the word of a prince who had so often deceived them?

F.—I cannot help believing with Hume that the good faith of Charles has been most rashly and unjustly called in question. He observes that it would defy the most malignant scrutiny.

M.—Why, Hume himself furnishes proofs to the contrary;—but not to pay that prejudiced and inconsistent writer the compliment of treating his work as an authority, though it is as interesting as a work of the sort can well be, let us turn to the cold and judge-like Hallam, who remarks that Charles leading fault was *a want of sincerity*. "He was in the constant habit," says this historian, "of perverting his natural acuteness to the mean subterfuges of equivocal language." The same author characterizes the evasion of the Petition of Right as an act of *absurd and audacious insincerity*. Millar calls it *pitiful*.

F.—Is no allowance to be made for Charles on account of the difficult circumstances in which he was placed?

M.—Why shall we excuse that in a king which we never excuse in a subject. The subject's plea of expediency or necessity would be rejected with scorn. The barefaced plunder of the people and the subversion of the laws of the realm, have been often

excused though the starving wretch who should steal a loaf of bread to save the lives of wife and children, would be thought justly served if he were whipped through the streets and thrown into a dungeon. A despot grasping at illegal power may offend against the laws of God and man without much sacrifice of reputation, but he who agonized with hunger seizes a mouthful of food, is a wretch unworthy of the existence he attempts to prolong! We can never reason fairly upon the characters of kings unless we remember that they are of the same flesh and blood as other men; and though this seems a truism, it is not *felt* to be one, even in this age of enlightenment; for we yet daily read accounts, even in the *liberal* journals, of the sayings and doings of the reigning sovereign, written in a style that indicates the most disgusting idolatry of kingly power. Lucy Aiken, in her *Memoirs of the Court of Charles*, traces the king's insincerity back to his infancy. "The child is father of the man." She speaks with proper indignation of a fact which you will not find in Hume, that to raise money a quantity of paper was taken, by the king's order, on credit, and then sold at a great under-value. The king, she says, also made a seizure of the bullion at the mint; but on the offer of a loan of 30,000*l.* by the merchants interested, it was released. He *even devised a scheme for debasing the coin*, but it was disconcerted by the opposition of the Privy Council. Acts of a less criminal nature would have brought a subject to the gallows or the block.

F.—Are Miss Aiken's assertions worth much? I think not.

M.—She is not a great writer, but her honesty has not, I think, been questioned, and, if I remember rightly, she quotes her authorities fairly. But even Clarendon, who loved his worthless master merely because he was a king, was not blind to some of his faults, and, in allusion to his insincerities, bitterly exclaims, in a letter to Nicholas—"Oh! Mr. Secretary, those stratagems have given me more sad hours than all the misfortunes in war which have befallen the king, and *look like the effects of God's anger* towards us." On one occasion Secretary Cooke delivered a message from the king, to the House of Commons, asking,

whether the house *would rely upon the king's word.* The question was followed by a long silence—

Come then, expressive silence, *muse* his praise!

Pym proposed to move, whether the house should take the king's word or not—at which Cooke, in his indignation and alarm, begged the speaker to call him to order. "Truly, Mr. Speaker," said Pym, "the king's oath is as powerful as his word;"—a biting sarcasm, as he had just before observed (while complaining of the Royal illegalities,) that the people had already his Majesty's coronation oath to maintain the laws of England;—why need they take his word?

F.—Where did you meet with this anecdote?

M.—In a quarter where you would least expect to find it—in D'Israeli's *Curiosities of Literature.*

F.—It is impossible, I think, that Charles should have so deeply excited the enthusiastic love of his followers, if he had been really such a person as his enemies have described him to be.

M.—Oh, it is astonishing how little virtue is necessary to the popularity of a king—a divinity doth hedge him round, and a good-natured word or smile from royal lips, a graceful or condescending bow from a head that wears a crown, will make many a man utterly blind to the most monstrous imperfections.

F.—It is acknowledged, I believe, that Charles was not, like too many of our kings, indifferent to bloodshed. Even Hallam says that he was not the aggressor in the Civil War, and, that he showed an indisposition to strike the first blow.

M.—Hallam is so anxious to obtain the praise of rigid impartiality that he suppresses all natural feeling. Circumstances of the most atrocious character are detailed, by him, with a hermit-like calmness. We miss in this historian, what we naturally look for in an honest friend of freedom, a warmth and vehemence where those qualities would seem most natural, as in the relation of detestable acts of tyranny, or of gallant and glorious resistance. A mistrust of his own impartiality

makes him disposed, as a judge, to give Charles too often the benefit of the slightest doubt, and to say more in his favour than the feeling in the innermost recesses of his heart would entirely confirm. There is something of this kind in his attempt to relieve the king from the odium of being the first aggressor in the civil war, which is quite at variance with the Historian's own excellent remark, that the aggressor in a war is not the first who uses force, but the first who renders force necessary. Now surely there can be no question that the extreme tyranny of Charles had rendered it absolutely necessary on the part of the people, that they should take up arms in the defence of their own liberty. It is clear, from Hallam's own pages, that he himself would be the last to deny that the king had driven matters to that point which rendered "rebellion a duty." Guizot is more direct and straightforward in his decisions, for he is entirely free from all self-mistrust or those timid scruples which are apt to influence a native historian anxious to show himself scrupulously just even to a tyrant, who may be regarded with opposite feelings by contending parties.

M.—Mr. Ward, the author of *Tremaine*, has lately published a work which is intended to prove that the people of England were inexcusable traitors, in opposing so decidedly the wishes of that amiable person James the Second. Mr. Ward and his publishers must have felt that they were not unsupported by a party in the British nation, or they would not have ventured upon such a speculation. Mr. D'Israeli has attempted a still bolder undertaking—his defence of Charles the First includes an attack upon his patriotic opponents, Pym, Hampden, Elliott &c. &c. in five octavo volumes! No man would be so mad as to publish a defence of the old feudal system, or of any other system that was universally condemned by the present generation, and the appearance of such works as those of Ward and D'Israeli, sufficiently indicates the fact that, though the Schoolmaster has been long at work, he has yet many stupid and refractory scholars to enlighten and subdue.

F.—The reign of Charles will, I hope, be one day written in a

style which will do all parties more justice than any one has yet done them.

M.—Guizot is more decidedly severe than Hallam. He regards Charles with unmitigated hatred and contempt.

F.—I have not read Guizot's History—and if this be his feeling towards the unhappy Charles, I do not wish to read it.

M.—It is a great misfortune to the cause of liberty that the most popular of English Historians should have been so prejudiced in favor of the Stuart family. Hume has contrived, by his artful and enchanting narrative, to excite the sympathy of many a generous reader who would have thoroughly hated the tyrant, had he been painted by so fine an artist in true colors. So great is the delusion of those who are wholly under the spell of the enchanter, that they have imagined a resemblance in the fate and character of the Royal Martyr to those of the Saviour of mankind.

F.—Charles felt, no doubt, that it was his duty to support his rights and prerogatives as a king, and his kingly notions were not higher than those of his father.

M.—Why, no—they were rather less lofty, I suspect. James the First asserted that "*as it is blasphemy to dispute what God may do, so is it sedition to dispute what a king may do in the height of his power.*" James was a silly pedant and might have believed what he said. He was the first king, observes Pope, in one of his notes to the *Dunciad*, who assumed the title of *Sacred majesty*, "which his loyal clergy transferred *from God to him.*" But Charles, though he acted as if he was under the influence of the same pitiful delusion, had too much good sense to be deceived by the shallow absurdities which his weak father regarded as truisms. He knew well enough that the English Government was a mixed Government, and not an absolute monarchy, He knew too, or ought to have known, that the Crown of England was not enjoyed by a divine, indefeasable, hereditary right, for if it had been so, it would never have devolved upon the house of Stuart. He met with arguments more impressive than words to prove that a King of Eng-

land is dependent upon the representatives of the people for the very laws by which his own power is defined or supported, and for the means of performing his duties as the chief executive officer of the state. No one can suppose that Charles was such an idiot as to believe that "it was impossible for a King of England to be a delinquent," and that he was responsible only to God. When he made this assertion he knew full well that if he had attempted to play the part of a Nero, or, like one of the French Princes, had shot at the people from his palace windows, merely to pass away the time and amuse himself on a rainy day, the nation would have laughed to scorn his talk about divine right and irresponsibility, and have very justly denounced him and treated him as a delinquent. It is true that he was not guilty of acts of this character; but that he plundered the people, trampled on their rights, and endeavoured to subvert the constitution, are facts that it would be a work of supererrogation to insist upon. Charles the First did not err from ignorance: he was a reader and a reasoner; and he must have known that he had no more right to conspire against the parliament than the parliament had to conspire against the throne. In fact, the power of the Parliament being more nearly the voice of the nation, is in reality far less questionable than that of the king himself.

F.—At all events, you will allow that in private life Charles deserved the praise which Hume has bestowed upon him as a father and a husband.

M.—I think Macaulay has admirably answered this plea in the king's favour—"We charge him with having broken his coronation oath—and we are told that he kept his marriage vow! We accuse him of having given up his people to the merciless inflictions of the most hot-headed and hard-hearted of prelates—and the defence is that he took his little son on his knee and kissed him! We censure him for having violated the articles of the Petition of Right, after having, for good and valuable consideration, promised to observe them—and we are informed that he was accustomed to hear prayers at six in the morning. A good father! a good husband! ample apologies indeed for fifteen years

of persecution, tyranny, and falsehood!" In consequence of his repeated breach of "his princely word" he had made it impossible for the nation to restore him to power. Their only security was his death. It was a choice between the slavery of millions and the destruction of a single tyrant. He was accordingly brought to the block—a deed which Algernon Sidney pronounced "the bravest and justest ever done in England." Lewis the Sixteenth lost his life on the same account. The people could not trust "his princely word." The manifesto which he left behind him on his flight from Paris protested against all the measures to which he had previously and publicly given his assent.

F.—I am not prepared just now to handle this subject as I ought to do, and indeed, I begin to fear that we can hardly go on so smoothly as we have hitherto done, if we introduce politics into our Chit-Chat. Let us return again to the artists and the poets.

M.—With all my heart.



No. IX.



HAYDON—KEATS—BACON—NEWTON.

H.—A few evenings ago I read to you Wordsworth's interesting Sonnet to Haydon. I have just fallen in with another addressed to the same artist by Keats—and also another Sonnet of Wordsworth's to Haydon, on his striking picture of Bonaparte standing on the rock of St. Helena. The picture is in Sir Robert Peel's gallery.

ON HAYDON'S BONAPARTE AT ST. HELENA.

Haydon! Let worthier judges praise the skill
Here by thy pencil shown in truth of lines
And charm of colors; I applaud those signs
Of thought, that give the true *poetic* thrill;
That unencumbered whole of blank and still,

Sky without cloud—ocean without a wave,
And the one Man that labored to enslave
The World, sole standing high on the bare hill,—
Back turned, arms folded—the unapparent face
Tinged, we may fancy, in this dreary place—
With light reflected from the invisible sun,
Set, like his fortunes; but not set for aye
Like *them*: the unguilty Power pursues his way,
And before *him* doth dawn perpetual run.

A.—This is one of Wordsworth's best Sonnets, certainly, and gives a clear idea of the picture, but I wish the poet had not been puzzled how to reconcile sense and rhyme in the fifth line. That *whole of blank and still*—is awkward enough—*a whole of still!* Haydon seems to have been a favorite with the poets. I remember a pleasing Sonnet by Miss Mitford addressed to him on his great picture of the *Judgment of Solomon*, which he sold for seven hundred pounds. On the appearance of the picture, the Directors of the British Institution voted the artist a complimentary present of one hundred guineas. It is said that Mr. West, on looking at the work, was affected to tears at the figure of the pale, fainting mother. The Earl of Egremont gave him, 500 guineas for his *Alexander, returning in Triumph after having vanquished Bucephalus;* and Lord de Tabley gave him 200 guineas for the *Venus and Adonis.* His Macbeth, which has been greatly admired, was painted for Sir George Beaumont, a successful artist himself, and a liberal patron of genius in others;—and yet, with all this patronage, Haydon was always in difficulties. There must have been a good deal of merit in his pictures, or they never would have been purchased at such large prices by men of acknowledged taste; but I confess I never looked upon one of his productions without thinking more of its defects than its beauties. The Painter was evidently of a poetical temperament, and there is some grandeur in most of his conceptions, though even in his best works there is considerable coarseness of execution.

H.—Haydon was such a capital judge of art in others that he used to amaze me sometimes with his blindness to the gross defects of his own style. But he carried his love of breadth and

his hatred of high finish to such an extreme, that, so long as he produced a good general effect in his vast pictures, viewed at a certain distance, he troubled himself very little about minute objections. He thoroughly despised a critic with a microscopic eye. There is no doubt that in his anxiety to avoid a petty style and smooth finish, he fell into an opposite extreme.

A.—Yes—just as Wordsworth, in avoiding the Della Cruscans, wrote too often like a clown. Every critic has discovered that a bare simplicity of style and child-like ecstasies about sparrows' nests, are not at all in unison with Wordsworth's natural genius, which is inclined to err in a contrary extreme. He has a strong tendency to be grave, solemn, pompous, and pedantic. But I rather suspect that Haydon did not paint coarsely in support of a favorite theory, but because he could not help himself—and his theory was merely used as a cloak to cover a multitude of sins, from which he was unable to free himself.

H.—I will not be certain that there is not some truth in this observation of yours. I fear too many of our artists and poets construct theories to suit their own practice. You may be sure, that Prout never expresses any admiration of smooth and highly finished landscapes, as he has the power of producing bold and strong effects with a few easy dashes that from other hands would be inexpressive daubs. His own kind of merit is, of course, the dearest in his own esteem, or at all events, he would wish the world to rate it highly. I understand that Turner—once so poetical an artist and so popular—has got some fine theory to justify his late atrocities. The yoke of an egg flung upon his canvass now seems to form his sun-sets, and his trees appear to be scratched with a bundle of bad pens.

A.—It seems a species of insanity. Alas, how many of our artists, as well as poets, close their lives in actual alienation of mind, reminding us of Wordsworth's pathetic couplet,

> We poets in our youth begin in gladness,
> But thereof comes, in the end, despondency and madness.

But let us hear the Sonnet of Keats, which we seem in danger of forgetting again.

H.—Here it is—

TO HAYDON.

High-mindedness, a jealousy for food,
  A loving kindness for the great man's fame
  Dwell here and there with people of no name
In noisome alley and in pathless wood:
And where we think the truth least understood,
  Oft may be found a singleness of aim
  Which ought to frighten into hooded shame
A money-mongering, pitiable brood.
How glorious this affection for the cause
  Of stedfast genius, toiling gallantly!
Whene'er a stout unbending champion awes
  Envy and malice to their native sty!
Unnumbered souls breathe out a still applause,
  Proud to behold him in his country's eye.

A.—That is a good sonnet—but Keats wrote another to the same artist which was much ridiculed, I remember, in *Blackwood*. Turn to the next page, and you'll find it.

H.—Yes—here it is.

TO HAYDON.

Great spirits now on earth are sojourning:
  He of the cloud, the cataract, the lake,
  Who on Helvellyn's mountain, wide awake,
Catches his freshness from Archangel's wing:
He of the rose, the violet, the spring,
  The social smile, the chain for Freedom's sake;
  And lo! whose stedfastness would never take
A meaner sound than Raphael's whispering,
And other spirits there are standing apart
  Upon the forehead of the age to come;
These, these will give the world another heart
  And other pulses. Hear ye not the hum
Of mighty workings?————
  Listen awhile, ye nations, and be dumb.

A.—To whom does the poet allude in the first quatrain? Is it Coleridge? The first half of the second quatrain is a compliment to Leigh Hunt, and the second half to Haydon, who has but a small share of a sonnet, nominally addressed to him.

The praise of Haydon is not judicious. It does not do to mention his name in the same sonnet with Raphael. There is no rough, unfinished, vulgar work in the great Italian.

H.—I was sorry to find the *Opium Eater* in a late magazine sneering at Keats. I should not have expected an insult to a true poet from such a quarter.

A.—Oh, it was merely for effect. The stream has now so long set in Keats' favor, that to breast it at this time of day gives a critic an air of originality, and you know how little *real* originality our present race of critics can boast of. They are a servile herd. They rarely seem to speak their own thoughts. Perhaps, it is as well that they do not—if they did it might only make matters worse.

H.—The *Opium Eater* attempts, very unfairly, I think, to lower Keats' character, by supposing the case of his having been called to take a part in public life, as a politician, and then calculating upon his probable conduct. Shelley, he says, would have been a great man in any position. It is not true. Shelley was too much of a visionary, and would have made even a worse Secretary of State than Addison himself. But who ever dreamed of lowering Addison's intellectual character because a common clerk got through the details of office with more readiness and facility? Cowper was not the less an ornament to the literature of his country, because he was unfitted to take a part in public affairs, and was driven to madness at the thought of being called upon to read a report to the House of Commons. What sort of a politician would Newton have made?

A.—It is absurd, indeed, to confound the different orders of intellect, and to lower the claims of genius by placing it in false positions; but I cannot help thinking, my dear H—, that you have a tendency to overrate the imaginative faculty and to do injustice to science. I believe you look upon William Shakspeare as a much greater man than Sir Isaac Newton, and this I hold to be an egregious mistake.

H.—I confess that I have not the same reverence for scientific genius that I have for literary or metaphysical power. I think such

men as Plato and Aristotle exhibit a higher order of intellect than Newton's. Lord Bacon, too, was his superior. I believe I mentioned to you the other day that Landor places Bacon above all other philosophers in intellectual power, but below Shakspeare, making Shakspeare "the foremost man of all this world." Hallam, too, who is a cold and cautious judge, puts Shakspeare not at the head of English Literature only, but of *all* Literature.

A.—Literature has never effected half the practical good to mankind that science has.

H.—I doubt that greatly—but even if it were true, it is beside the question. We cannot measure the size of a man's intellect by the good that he works with it. Perhaps Isaac Watts's doggrel hymns have done as much good to mankind as Milton's Paradise Lost; but there is no slight difference between the genius of the two writers.

A.—Then you seriously think that the severe reasonings and profound calculations of a Newton are of less value than the facile fancies of a poet?

H.—You do not put the case fairly; I never said anything regarding the comparative value of poetry and science, though I think I *could* say a good deal on that subject too. Then. again, what has the facility or labor of production to do with the abstract value of poetry or science? The question of ease or toil is of importance to the producer—not to those who benefit by his productions. The *rarity* of a thing may, indeed. enhance its value. A scientific man inherits the experience and collected treasures of preceding times, and is urged on and assisted by his contemporaries in the same department of knowledge. He is seldom a very great way in advance of his own age, and is generally overtaken and left in the rear in the next. He is the creature of his own times, and if you deduct from him all that he has received from others you make him poor indeed. Now the poet's merit is all his own—exclusively his own. It is perfectly individual, and independent. Homer, though he lived so long ago, is still the greatest of poets, if we except Shaks-

peare. A scientific work fifty years old is out of date. The works of Shakspeare after three centuries are more valuable than ever.

A.—Well—I think it goes against you, that poetry exhibits no correspondent progress with the general advance of the world, so that the ancient barbarian remains still equal or superior to his civilized descendants.

H.—The poetical faculty is a natural power comparatively little influenced by any system of education. Poetical power has been not only always rare, but has seemed so independent of external circumstances, that mankind in all ages and countries have regarded it as something mysterious and divine—as a species of inspiration—as a gift direct from Heaven.

A.—And yet it is in reality no more a gift from Heaven than those other powers of the mind, which enable men to collect and digest the scientific knowledge that is floating about the world. I observe that you never overrate mere learning, but you are too apt, my dear H., to argue as if you thought that there was nothing excellent in life but poetry.

H.—Is not that a little too severe ? You cannot mean it.

A.—At all events I often wish I could drive you from your books into the gay world, or into the open fields.

H.—As to the gay world—I leave it to others,—but of the open fields I am never tired, though latterly, I have been unfortunately so much of a stay-at-home. When I *do* go out, I enjoy the blue sky and the green meadows and the glittering streams quite as much as you do—perhaps more. At all events no man can echo with greater delight than I do the noble sentiment of Thomson—

> I care not Fortune what you me deny,
> You cannot bar me of free Nature's grace,
> You cannot shut the windows of the sky
> Through which Aurora shows her brightening face ;
> You cannot bar my constant feet to trace
> The woods, the lawns, the living streams at eve.

A.—I suppose you have read old Isaac Walton.

H.—Oh yes—what a delightful book it is ! I am a patient

angler myself—in spite of the famous definition—"a stick and a string, with a worm at one end and a fool at the other." I used to be fond of sporting, too, and could handle a gun tolerably

In my hot youth when George the Third was King.

I have passed many pleasant hours in the jungles of the upper provinces of India. It is impossible to conceive a more beautiful and romantic spectacle than a stag-hunt among the forest-clad mountains of Bundelcund. I happened once to be one of a large party who joined the Rajah of Chirkharee in a sporting excursion. The preceding night his people completely surrounded the neighbourhood, and contracting their circle by degrees, at last confined the game within a narrow glen. Arriving at day-break at the appointed spot, we divided into two parties, and stationed ourselves on the sides of the hills. At the sound of the Rajah's horn, the people opened their circle, and then, with music and cheering, drove the game towards us. At once a thousand stags and deer of every size and description bounded along the valley! I was at first so struck with their grace, beauty, and variety, that I was unable to use my fowling-piece; but the Rajah, hinting his impatience or surprise at my unsportsmanlike and too poetical delay, I fired almost at random, and brought to the ground a noble animal, that required six men to carry it home. The rest of the party were all more or less successful.

A.—I have heard that Bundelcund is not a very pleasant part of India to live in.

H.—The hot winds there are truly dreadful, particularly in those parts of the country that abound in rocky hills, which are so thoroughly heated, that they retain their warmth from sunset to sunrise. The air in the immediate neighbourhood of the hills is like that of an oven. The natives wind large folds of cloth round their heads and faces, leaving themselves only just enough exposed about the eyes and mouth to be able to see and breathe. This precaution is taken to avoid what may be called the death-blasts which sometimes rush suddenly between the hills. It is

said that travel-tired pedestrians, crossed by those scorching puffs, sometimes drop to the earth as if shot by a musket ball. If cold water or medical assistance be not speedily procurable, death is the result.

A.—Why, this is almost as bad as the Simoon of the desert. Do you recollect Southey's description?

> ———————— Such ominous fear
> Seizes the traveller o'er the trackless sands,
> Who marks the dread Simoon across the waste
> Sweep his swift pestilence. To earth he falls,
> Nor dares give utterance to the inward prayer,
> Deeming the genius of the Desert breathes
> The purple blast of death.

H.—Darwin also describes the Simoon—

> Fierce on blue steams he rides the tainted air,
> Points his keen eye and waves his whistling hair,
> While as he turns, the undulating soil,
> Rolls its red waves, and billowy deserts boil.

A.—Darwin's lines are picturesque, but deformed as usual by stiffness and affectation. The first line is bad. "*Points his keen eye*" is detestable. There is always something meretricious in his best passages.

H.—You observed just now that I did not overrate mere learning. It is very true, I think the head of a merely learned man is little better than a book-shelf—the passive recipient of the productions of others. It does not follow that all he eats must turn into blood. Some one said of the learned Warburton, whose notes to Shakspeare and Pope are so unspeakably contemptible, that he had never met with a man with so craving an appetite and so weak a digestion. And now that I have brought "the proud and bitter Bishop," as Bulwer calls him, *on the carpet*, let me digress a little from our main subject and say a word or two upon

> This bookful blockhead ignorantly read,
> With loads of learned lumber in his head.

His comments on our Prince of Dramatists are sometimes so

ludicrously false that the reader can hardly believe he was in earnest. "Hurd cried up Warburton's preposterous notes on Shakspeare," says Horace Walpole, "which would have died of their own folly, though Mr. Edwards* had not put them to death with the keenest wit in the world." Warburton's notes on Pope are just as bad. It is strange that Pope should have fallen into the indiscretion of bequeathing his works to the care of an editor so utterly devoid of taste in matters poetical as this vulgar and bullying Bishop, who passes over the real beauties of his author to point out the merit of such a passage as this—

> Avidien, or his wife (no matter which
> For him you'll call a dog, and her a ——)
> Sell their presented partridges, and fruits,
> And humbly live on rabbits and on roots.

"Our Poet," saith the learned critic with reference to these four lines "had the art of giving wit and dignity to his Billingsgate." Warton gravely adds, "I see neither wit nor dignity in these names." No—nor did any other reader in all England.

A.—You should never quote that affected coxcomb, that effeminate gossip, Horace Walpole, on a question of literature. In a letter of his to a French Lawyer he says, "all that Aristotle or his superiors have taught us has not yet subdued us to regularity, we still prefer the extravagant beauties of Shakspeare and Milton to the cold and well disciplined merit of Addison, and even to the sober and correct works of Pope. Nay, it was but t'other day that we were transported to hear Churchhill rave in numbers less chastised than Dryden's—but still in numbers like Dryden's."

H.—I suspect Walpole penned that nonsense, out of compliment to the national prejudices of his correspondent. He had been franker with a more celebrated Frenchman—Voltaire—who complained of his declaring war with him in defence *of that buffoon Shakspeare*. But to return to Warburton's comments.

> See Ward, by battered beaux invited over,
> And desperate misery lays hold on Dover.

* In his Canons of Criticism.

"There is a *prettiness*," says Warburton, "in this expression *(lays hold)* which depends on its contrast to that *slippery* medicine by which this quack (Ward) rendered himself famous, namely, *quicksilver*." (! !)

> Not that I'd lop the beauties from his book,
> Like slashing Bentley, with his desperate hook.

"Alluding," says Warburton, "to the several passages of Milton which Bentley has reprobated, by including them within hooks." Well may Warton ask if Warburton can be serious.

A.—Pope has several capital descriptions of such commentators as some of his own have turned out to be—Here is one——

> These leave the sense their learning to display,
> And those explain the meaning quite away.

H.—Pope tells us, in his *Moral Essays*, that riches are bestowed on mortals without distinction—

> Given to the fool, the mad, the vain, the evil,
> To Ward, to Waters, Chartres and the Devil.

And Warburton, with his usual sagacity, takes care to explain that in naming his Satanic Majesty, the poet alludes to "the vulgar opinion that all mines of metal and subterraneous treasures are in the guard of the Devil." (! !) The poet, speaking of medals struck by ambition to commemorate conquests, says

> A narrow orb each crowded conquest keeps;

which, says Warburton, is in ridicule of the Romans, who gave the title of *Orbis Romanus* to their empire. (! !)

> That not in fancy's maze he wandered long,
> But stooped to truth and moralized his song.

Here, according to the sagacious commentator, the poet alludes to a falcon *stooping* to its prey. (! !)

> The whisper that to greatness still too near—

"Shakspeare," says our subtle critic, "has finely expressed this office of the sycophant of greatness

Rain *sacrificial whisperings* in his ear—

"By which he meant the immolating men's reputations to the vice or vanity of his patron"—Did Shakspeare mean this? asks Warton.

> To Cato, Virgil paid one honest line;
> O, let my country's friends illumine mine!

"A pretty expression," says Warburton, "alluding to the old practice of illuminating manuscripts with gold and vermillion." (! ! !)

A.—If you would know the might of human genius, said Hazlitt, read Shakspeare; if you would know the littleness of human learning, read his commentators. The character of Warburton reminds me of the well-known passage in Milton descriptive of the uselessness of undigested learning.

> ——— Who reads,
> Incessantly, and to his reading brings not
> A spirit and judgment equal or superior
> (And what he brings, what need he elsewhere seek)
> Uncertain and unsettled still remains;
> *Deep versed in books and shallow in himself,*
> *Crude or intoxicate*, collecting toys
> And trifles for choice matters, with a spunge,
> As children gathering trifles on the shore.

Hobbes used to say that if he had spent as much time in reading as some learned men he would have been as ignorant. Perhaps there never was a man with equal powers of mind who wrote so often like an idiot as the author of the *Divine Legation of Moses*. His learning was prodigious, and that he possessed gigantic abilities of a certain sort it would be idle to dispute; but his intellect, with all its strength, was wild and unsound. His taste was glaringly incorrect and he certainly had no share of that very uncommon quality called common sense. Very few of his strange interpretations of Pope and Shakspeare have even an inverted ingenuity to recommend them. An octavo volume has been devoted to a collection of the Bishop's egregious errors as a commentator on Shakspeare. If the commentator had

been an ordinary fool, the exposure of him would have been a useless task, but the follies of the learned are sometimes worth recording as lessons to mankind. Warburton was always violent and self-willed. As an illustration of his temper, I may remind you of what Spence tells us, that this arrogant and ferocious priest was originally an attorney, and "got into orders by spitting in a nobleman's face at an election." Churchill says of him—

> He was so proud, that should he meet
> The twelve Apostles in the street,
> He'd turn his nose up at them all,
> And shove his Saviour from the wall.



No. X.



SIR ISAAC NEWTON—PASCAL—MATHEMATICS—ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY—UTILITARIANISM.



H.—I saw some very good remarks the other day in *Blackwood's Magazine* on the subject of imagination. A man, says the writer, (either Wilson or Lockhart, I suppose) may have high intellect, with little or no imagination, but he cannot have a high imagination with little or no intellect. The intellect of Dante, Milton, and Shakspeare was higher, he thinks, than that of Aristotle, Newton, and Bacon.

A.—Both Wilson and Lockhart are poets; and poets have always been disposed to overrate the value of the faculties required for the production of excellence in their favorite art. Such partiality is a very natural weakness. You talk as if only great poets and artists were largely gifted with high imagination. It is a gross mistake. All great inventions and discoveries are first *suggested* by the imaginative faculty and completed by deep thought and study.

H.—I am glad to find you take this turn; because scientific

men in general speak with great contempt of the imagination, and do not acknowledge the utility of the divinest of our faculties. But you go almost as far as Wordsworth, who says that poetry is the breath and finer spirit of *all* knowledge. What poetry there is in Lord Bacon's Essays! His thoughts often *involuntarily* move harmonious numbers. As the book is at hand let me call your attention to a passage in the Essay on Gardens—

"For the heath, which was the third part of our plot, I wished it to be framed as much as may be to a natural wildness. Trees I would have none in it, but some thickets made only of sweet-briar and honey-suckle, and some wild vine amongst; and the ground set with violets, strawberries, and primroses; for these are sweet and prosper in the shade."

Now observe how naturally this passage takes the form of blank-verse:—

For the heath, which was the third part of our plot,
——— I wished it to be framed
As much as may be to a natural wildness.
Trees I'd have none in it, but some thickets made
Only of sweet-briar and honey-suckle,
And some wild vine amongst; and the ground set
With violets, strawberries and primroses;
For these are sweet and prosper in the shade.

How poetical is the remark in the same Essay that the breath of flowers is far sweeter in the hand than in the air, *where it comes and goes like the warbling of music!*

A.—Yes—there is poetry in Lord Bacon's prose; but if there were not something besides and better, he would not rank quite so highly amongst the benefactors of mankind.

H.—You would not say so, if you had a due sense of the real claims of poetry, and had not been in the habit of regarding it as nothing more than an elegant accomplishment. "Newton *is* a great man," said Coleridge, "but excuse me if I think it would take many Newtons to make a Milton."

A.—This sort of arithmetical criticism applied to intellectual qualities of totally different natures is supremely absurd and unjust. He might as well have said it would take many turnips to make a tulip. And why thus multiply your poetical authori-

ties? On matters of science they have not the weight of a straw, except with poets themselves.

H.—There is an excellent article in the *Edinburgh Review* on the subject of mathematics, in which the writer produces a host of high authorities against the study of them as a mental exercise. He brings forward some of the most eminent mathematicians as evidence against their own sciences. He shows that even mathematicians themselves have felt that too close a study of mathematics contracts and freezes the intellect.

A.—Oh, nothing is easier than to collect the opinions of celebrated men for or against any branch of human learning. From Solomon, who tells us that all is vanity and vexation of spirit, down to our own days, there is perhaps no eminent personage to be found who has not, at some time or other, under the weariness of labour or disappointment, expressed his disgust at his own peculiar occupation.

H.—Pascal, a profound genius and an eminent mathematician, was amongst those who have avowed their contempt for mathematics.

A.—Pascal died a devotee at thirty-nine, and expressed his contempt for *all* human learning, and abandoned *all* studies, as he himself says, in order to apply himself solely to what our Saviour calls the one thing needful.

H.—If you will look into Bayle's *Philosophical Dictionary* you will find it there stated that Pascal despised mathematics before he gave himself up to devotion. You observe that it is easy to collect authorities for or against any branch of human knowledge. This is true with respect to the opinions of men on those arts and sciences in which they have not themselves excelled; but it would give you some little trouble, I suspect, to show that eminent historians, philosophers, poets, painters, and musicians have spoken with that unqualified contempt of the subject of their studies with which eminent mathematicians have spoken of their own sciences.

A.—You are much too fond of settling all questions by the authority of great names. The American Franklin tells us that

Plato has somewhere said that any one who does not understand the 117th proposition of the 13th Book of Euclid ought not to be ranked amongst rational creatures. If the authority of a great name were a great argument this ought to settle our dispute. I do not attribute so much importance as you do to the decision of individuals, however eminent, respecting *any* particular branch of knowledge. *All* true knowledge is more or less valuable, and perhaps nothing would be more easy than to prove that of all knowledge mathematical knowledge is the most practically useful.

H.—How can you talk in this extravagant way? Why, a knowledge of mathematics is of so little use in daily life that you may know a man intimately for half a century without discovering whether he has mastered the first proposition in Euclid. But ignorance in the elements of a literary education cannot be concealed for a day—not for an hour—not indeed for five minutes, if the ignoramus will only attempt to speak or write. Are there not hundreds of ladies and of gentlemen, too, (eminent authors amongst them—teachers of mankind) whose conversation is in the highest degree elegant, instructive, and delightful, who know *absolutely nothing* of the first elements of mathematics? Bayle, says D'Israeli, knew nothing of Geometry, and, as LeClerc informs us, acknowledged that he could not comprehend the first problem in Euclid—and yet what a subtle reasoner he was! What would be the mental character of that man or woman who should know *absolutely nothing* of the first elements of literature? Could he or she be otherwise than coarse and vulgar? Which student would have the best chance of acquiring a refinement and elevation of soul—he who should confine himself to literature or he who should confine himself to mathematics? Pope in his Dunciad has a couplet against mathematics.

> Full in the midst of Euclid dip at once,
> And petrify a genius to a dunce.

Do you think that the name of Shakspeare or Milton could be put in the place of Euclid, in this couplet, without turning the meaning into downright nonsense?

A.—I am sick of your poetical authorities. I laugh at your

poets who laugh at mathematics; they talk as if the great business of life was to write and read verses, and they affect a superiority over every art or science that happens to be beyond their comprehension.

H.—Beyond their comprehension! Dugald Stewart was no poet, and yet you must remember his remark—"How small is the number of individuals who are qualified to think justly on metaphysical, moral, or political subjects, in comparison with those, who may be trained by practice to follow the longest processes of mathematical reasoning." It is notorious that little boys at school, and very dull ones, too, often acquire, in a wonderfully short time, a marvellous amount of mathematical knowledge. There was "*a calculating boy,*" exhibited in London some years ago, who was almost an idiot, but who exhibited an amazing aptitude for the most difficult mathematical calculations. Idiotic boys do not shine in literature. The *Journal of Education* (for October 1832) quotes from a Sicilian Journal an account of three mathematical children. One of them, who was only seven years old, gave off-hand answers to problems which usually require tedious arithmetical calculations. He would listen to a question and give his solution while pursuing his pastimes. Montaigne, in one of his Essays, tells us that the "Tunny-fish is well acquainted with mathematics." I have known many human mathematicians who seemed to be very little elevated above the Tunny-fish. A man's wisdom, or utility, or moral worth depends very little upon the propositions in Euclid.

A.—You might add with equal truth that they depend as little on *as in presenti* or *propria quæ maribus.*

H.—Well, then, let me have an explanation of the utility of the science of mathematics.

A.—It builds our houses and our bridges; fortifies them and defends them when fortified—constructs our ships and takes them safely across the pathless ocean—frames every kind of machinery, from the watch, which is our constant guide and companion, to the steam-engine, which is uniting the opposite ends of the earth in an intercourse more intimate than ever neigh-

bouring nations enjoyed without it. It gives us the most delicate fabrics of clothing, as well as the most substantial; aids our decaying sight, and enters into every branch of human industry, teaching us how to apply the rude materials of nature to the greatest advantage. If we leave the practical and turn to the regions of speculation, how vastly the human mind is enlarged by the sublime contemplation of astronomy! Is there any thing "*cold, rigid, and one-sided*" in speculations which embrace infinity and almost eternity—in studies which enable us to contemplate this vast and magnificent creation, not with ignorant wonder, but with an admiration increasing in exact proportion to our knowledge? If such studies will not enlarge the mind, what will? Do they not lead to a reverence for the great Creator, whose mercies are over all his works? Let me add, that the science of mathematics is the only branch of human knowledge which is strictly and literally of *universal* application.

H.—Bravo! You have done eloquent justice to your subject, and proved yourself a foeman worthy of one's steel. It is a pity, however, that you did not omit your *addition*. It would take greater genius than either yours or mine to give mathematics an *universal* application. The mathematical sciences relate to number, quantity, space, form and time—but how they can relate to *every thing else*, I really cannot understand. Can they measure sentiment? Can they calculate moral probabilities? Can they decide questions of taste and feeling? A certain mathematician exhibited nothing but his own ignorance when he thought that he had shown the worthlessness of Milton's *Paradise Lost* by asking what it *proved*. The movements of the human heart, and the whole spiritual world are beyond the reach of measurement and calculation. If the mathematician be resolved to apply his science to daily life he must not attempt to meddle with its social relations and moral reasonings, but with things purely physical.

> For he by Geometric scale
> Could take the size of pots of ale;
> Resolve, by sines and tangents, strait,
> If bread or butter wanted weight,
> And wisely tell, what hour o' the day
> The clock does strike, by Algebra.

A.—You have made the remark that the rarity of a thing may enhance its value. Well—are there many Newtons ?

H.—No—are there many Homers ? But very great distinction is far more easily acquired in science than in poetry. In some respects attainments in science are analogous to mere learning, and mere learning never ranked very high in the estimation of mankind. Of the comparatively small intellectual power required for all attainments in science, I think you may form a pretty fair notion, from the facility with which a hundred school-boys can be urged on to mathematical triumphs in almost an incredibly short space of time, and the tedious slowness and great inequality of the same boys in general literature. In one year how great an advance may be made in mathematics by boys of industry and zeal, and a habit of close attention ! Aristotle has noticed the facility with which mere boys may become good geometers. But the progress in literature is slow and toilsome, because, to comprehend the delicate embodiments of moral and metaphysical truth, and acquire a correct taste, demands certain qualities which are beyond even the mature understanding of ordinary men, and the mind of a young student, however highly gifted by nature, must considerably expand before he can thoroughly appreciate literary excellence. The higher faculties of the mind are of slow growth, however sedulously cultivated; but the capacity to measure and calculate and remember soon comes, and rapidly improves. I prefer all ethical or metaphysical thought and speculation to the exact sciences. I think the ethical or metaphysical philosopher draws his materials more directly from his own heart and brain than the natural or scientific philosopher, and that he exhibits a higher order of intellect and a wider range of meditation. The heart and mind of man are by far the most interesting and important objects in the universe, and it is with these that the metaphysician and the moralist are conversant. One human soul is worth all the matter in the world, and affords a profounder and more delightful study than any thing relating to mere form and quantity.

A.—I suspect you would find it very difficult to prove that

Newton's mind was a mere recipient. He was as great a discoverer in science as Columbus was of lands.

H.—He made discoveries, it is true, but he was in the company of hundreds of fellow-laborers. They were all on the same road, and he was only an additional step or two in advance of the advancing crowd. He was assisted by the spirit and experience of the age. If Newton had not discovered the law of gravitation it would inevitably have been discovered by some other man, perhaps greatly his inferior, and certainly America would not have remained unknown to this day had Columbus never existed.* It is said that Kepler had fully conceived the law of gravitation† and anticipated the theory of prismatic colors. Many foreign writers attribute to Liebnitz several of the discoveries which we attribute exclusively to Newton.‡ Galileo's supposed

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* Seneca, the tragedian hath these verses :—

"————Venient annis
Sæcula seris, quibus Oceanus
Vincula rerum laxet, et ingens
Pateat Jellus, Tiphysque novos
Detegat orbes ; nec sit terris
Ultima Thule :"

A prophecy of the discovery of America.—*Lord Bacon's Essay on Prophecies.*

† There is not a more glorious achievement of scientific genius upon record, than Kepler's guesses, prophecies, and ultimate apprehension of the law of the mean distances of the planets as connected with the period of their revolutions round the sun. *Gravitation, too, he had fully conceived ;* but, because it seemed inconsistent with some received observations on light, he gave it up, in allegiance, as he says, to nature. Yet the idea vexed and haunted his mind ; "*vexat me et lacessit*" are his words, I believe."—*Coleridge.*

‡ While this volume is passing through the press, I meet with the following paragraph :—" The *Bombay Times* learns that the chair of Natural Philosophy in the University of St. Andrews has been offered to Mr. Adams of Cambridge, whom our readers will recognize as the discoverer of the planet Neptune, although, unfortunately for the credit of English science, he did not make known the discovery until the existence of the planet was discovered and proclaimed by Le Verrier. Such an honor as this does not often fall to an undergraduate, although it can hardly counterbalance the chagrin of the young *savant* at having been anticipated in the publication of the discovery."—*Bengal Hurkaru, June 9th,* 1847.

discovery or invention of the telescope seems to have been only an inprovement upon another man's idea. The inventors of printing and gunpowder are unknown. Sir Humphrey Davy, it is said, when near his end, expressed his regret that he was leaving the world when it was "so near the brink of three great discoveries." He had no apprehension that there would be a want of men to make them. I wish a dying poet could calculate with the same certainty on new plays like those of Shakspeare, or new Epics like those of Milton.

A.—Luckily the world can go on much more easily without verses than without the results of science. But even putting out of view the practical utility of mathematics in the arts of life, remember how the study of this science sharpens and braces the reasoning powers. This very book upon your table, perhaps will furnish us with something to the point. Let us turn to the article on Mathematics. Listen to this passage—

"The sciences of which we speak (the mathematical sciences) may be considered either as disciplines of the mind, or as instruments in the investigation of nature and the advancement of the arts. In the former point of view their object is to strengthen the power of logical deduction by frequent examples: to give a view of the difference between reasoning on probable premises and on certain ones, by the construction of a body of results which in no case involve any of the uncertainty arising from the previous introduction of that which may be false: to form the habit of applying the attention closely to difficulties which can only be conquered by thought, and over which the victory is certain, if the right means be used; to establish confidence in abstract reasoning, by the exhibition of processes whose results may be verified in many different ways; to help in enabling the student to acquire correct notions and habits of generalisation; to give caution in receiving that which at first sight appears good reasoning; to instil a correct estimate of the powers of the mind, by pointing out the enormous extent of the consequences which may be developed out of a few of its most inherent notions, and its utter incapacity to imagine, much less to attain, the boundary of knowledge; to methodise the invention of the means of expressing thought, and to make apparent the advantages of system and analogy in the formation of language and symbols; to sharpen the power of investigation, and the faculty of suggesting new combinations of the resources of thought; to enable the historical student to look at men of different races, opinions, and habits, in those parts of their minds where

it might be supposed *à priori* that all would most nearly agree; and to give the luxury of pursuing a study in which self-interest cannot lay down premises nor deduce conclusions.—*Penny Cyclopædia.*

H.—Mathematicians are like helpless children beyond the pale of their own science. They cannot walk steadily out of their own go-cart. Even in matters relating to their favorite science, they are often strangely fantastical. Kepler is said to have expressed his belief that the solid globe of earth is an enormous animal, and that the tides are produced by the spouting out of water through its gills—a pretty specimen of mathematical reasoning! Mathematicians have too often neither common sense nor rare sense. When required to exercise their judgment on moral evidence they are often either ludicrously credulous or most unreasonably sceptical. Even Newton himself sometimes spoke and wrote in a strain that made his friends doubt his sanity. He had "a hankering after the French Prophets" and was "possessed with the old fooleries of astrology" and was "so far gone in chemistry as to be upon the hunt after the philosopher's stone." Coleridge observes that Newton's lucubrations on Daniel and the Revelations are little less than downright raving.

A.—Did not the poet Goldsmith "*talk like poor Poll?*"

H.—Yes—but "*he wrote like an angel,*" and on a wide range of subjects.

A.—And was not "the great moralist," the "leviathan of literature," Dr. Johnson, childishly superstitious? And were not his speculations on the principle of the arch "little better than downright raving?"

H.—I, on my side, am not so extravagant as to contend that moral, metaphysical, or political reasoning, will apply to mathematical subjects— you, on your side, contend that mathematical reasoning may be applied to moral, metaphysical or political subjects. You confound very opposite things. If a literary man fall into gross errors in speculating upon mathematical subjects what does it prove? Not that he is a stupid person generally, but that he is ignorant of a particular branch of knowledge. Notwithstanding those mistakes, he may be a man of the very

highest intellect. But if a writer treat absurdly a subject which is not purely technical or professional—a subject for which good sense and sober judgment or originality of mind, rather than peculiar information, is required to enable him to handle it satisfactorily, the world is justified in "writing him down an ass."

A.—Even allowing your argument to embody a general truth, I utterly deny its applicability in the slightest degree to any really eminent mathematician. I have never read Newton's work on the Prophecies. It may be better or worse for aught I know than a work of a similar nature by his namesake; but this is certain, that in the interpretation of prophecies very acute writers—not mathematicians only—have greatly differed, and it is not fair to form any conclusion against a man's general powers of intellect, because his interpretation of a mysterious passage of Scripture is different from our own. Newton's was the mightiest of human minds. Your objections only tend to show that it was not perfect. Perhaps there is no instance in the history of genius of powers so gigantic being associated with such unaffected modesty. We cannot too often call to mind his exquisitely beautiful declaration, made at the close of his useful life, of the little he had done. "I do not know," said he, "what I may seem to the world, but, as to myself, I seem to have been only like a boy playing on the sea shore and diverting myself in now and then finding a smoother pebble or a prettier shell than ordinary, whilst the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me."

H.—Is it possible that Newton had that passage of Milton in his mind, which was applied the other evening to the learned Warburton, concluding with the line

> As children gathering pebbles on the shore?

L.—Are not the exact sciences of more importance than pure literature, or the art of composition?

H.—The art of composition, the art of embodying well chosen thoughts in well chosen words cannot be over-rated. It is by words alone that the mighty dead yet live and can yet instruct

us. It is by the use of these alone that they were able to leave behind them a legacy to the whole human race incalculably more precious than any other earthly good. Thoughts unexpressed, imprisoned in a solitary brain, are short-lived, and limited in their utility. Thoughts unembodied in words are ghost-like and impalpable, and haunt but one human brain. Thoughts of dumb men are smothered in their dark and silent cradles. The soul lives best without the body, but thoughts cannot long exist unless clothed in words.

How curious is it that a true poet or an eloquent speaker should be able to seize, with electrical rapidity, on the exact word which he requires!—that out of a hundred thousand words he should bring forth the very one which alone suits his purpose. It is a wonderful, mysterious, indescribable process of the mind! In what part of the brain are all these beautiful instruments of thought, as in a vast armoury, laid up for use? In what form or order are they disposed in that small ivory-walled citadel of the soul, the human head, that the commander of the place can in a moment lay his hand upon each as it is required, without hesitation or confusion? It may happen that the word in requisition has been lying silent and concealed in some dim corner of the memory, or what we please to phrase it, for half a century, and yet present itself as a word of yesterday at our sudden need. What an army of mysterious shapes—living thoughts—are crowded together on the small field of the brain, without pressure or confusion! At the bidding of the soul, how the thoughts rush out of their mysterious cells into the light of day, assume palpable and enduring forms, and become citizens of the world! No longer the exclusive property of the individual who brought them into existence, they visit the brains of millions of men, generation after generation. They 'wander through eternity.'

It is an exquisite encouragement to the toiling heart of genius to remember that books are immortal! They live on earth when their makers are in heaven. The great author has a double life. He exists in two spheres. Homer is beyond the stars, and here he is too in our snug and silent study. The moon with her calm,

pallid, pensive countenance of light—the all-cheering sun—the blue hills—the green vallies—the long winding rivers, that were gazed upon by Homer more than two thousand years ago, we gaze on now—and we repeat the same magical words that fell from his inspired lips and stirred the hearts of his contemporaries. The mortal frame of the divine Homer was as perishable as a tree or flower, but his spirit, and the printed form in which so large a portion of that spirit is now enshrined, will live for ever. The poetical part of his nature has passed into a tangible form—the property of the world—a legacy, bequeathed not only to individuals of wealth or power, but to all mankind. It is more precious than gold and more durable than granite.

Literature is a radiant palace, in which all men are welcome guests. Our hosts are the greatest spirits that have worn mortal clothing, Homer and Chaucer, and Spencer, Shakspeare, and Bacon, and Milton, a glorious company, stand at the portico and bid us enter. Men of all creeds and colors and conditions may boldly accept the invitation.

L.—Your mind is one-sided. Your education has taught you the beauty of the purely intellectual world, but it has not taught you how to set a proper value on things practical and useful.

H.—What are all physical and mechanical things—all measurements and calculations—compared to the movements of the immortal mind?

The proper study of mankind is man.

A.—You really talk as if men were all soul and nothing else—as if the discovery of the mariner's compass were less valuable than the discovery of a manuscript that would settle a dispute respecting a new reading of a passage in Shakspeare.

H.—I cannot measure intellectual power by the test of mere utility in the narrow sense of the term. Food is more immediately necessary than thought; yet speaking generally and without reference to an individual man in a state of starvation, a new thought is worth more than a new loaf of bread. But, because the effect of the thought is not so palpable and well defined, narrow and vulgar reasoners always think the loaf of bread the

more *useful* article. I am vexed that Macaulay, in his otherwise magnificent essay on Lord Bacon should have made an attempt to elevate the philosophy of physics above the philosophy of mind. If he were forced, he says, to make his choice between Seneca and the first shoemaker, he should pronounce for the tradesman in preference to the philosopher, because the moral maxims of the one were less useful than the shoes of the other. A school-boy would deserve to be whipped for so silly a paradox, if he were not misled by the Mills and Benthams of the age. If men had feet only and no brains a stout pair of shoes would be more useful than the Bible. But man is a compound being and possesses a soul as well as a body. We deeply feel the necessity of those nobler arts that

> Raise us from the mire
> And liberate our hearts from low pursuits
> By gross utilities enslaved

A.—Why, I always thought Macaulay an anti-utilitarian,

H.—So did I—perhaps he likes to show his ingenuity occasionally by arguing on the wrong side. In this spirit he asserted, in his essay on Milton, that the mind of a true poet must necessarily be unsound, and on the question of copyright argued against the claims of literary men to a property in the result of their own labors. I am afraid he will fairly go over to the party of Bentham one of these days. What is his attack on Plato but an indirect compliment to Bentham? He is in reality upholding the one-sided doctrine of *utility*, which, according to Bentham, applies only to things that can be handled, measured, and counted. With the Utilitarians man seems to be all body—every thing which relates to spirit they appear to think a matter of moonshine—the stuff of which dreams are made—the visions of idle poets. "There is no absolute *utility* in poetry," said Sir Humphrey Davy, "but it gives pleasure, and refines and exalts the mind." This is utilitarianism. To please the mind—to refine and exalt it—is *useless!*

A.—Let us not go much further just now into the interminable subject of utilitarianism. You are apt to run wild upon it.

H.—I confess that I am apt enough to lose my temper when I find men who ought to know better, elevating things local, physical, and temporal above things universal, spiritual, and eternal. An individual baker or cobbler may contribute to the ease and comfort of the craving stomachs or tender toes of a little circle for a little time—or perhaps even of a whole village for half a century. But an individual poet or philosopher by new images of intellectual beauty or sublime moral truths eloquently enforced, may gratify and elevate and strengthen the souls of countless millions for an indefinite number of ages. Beautiful images and glorious truths do not disappear quite so rapidly as wheaten loaves, nor wear away like shoes. It is true that the influence of authors of original genius on the minds of nations cannot be so exactly defined as that of the baker or the cobbler on the bodies of their customers, but few could have expected that a writer of Macaulay's sagacity and breadth of mind would fall into the pitifully vulgar error of questioning the utility of every thing that will not admit of being weighed, or counted, or measured, and even doubting the importance or the reality of moral power over the minds of men. According to him, Socrates and Plato were eloquent babblers of "fruitless wisdom." "Words and more words and nothing but words," he says "had been all the fruit of all the toil of all the most renowned sages of sixty generations." As if the *words* of these sages had not moulded the minds of generations and contributed to the refinement and elevation of our nature.

I would not be understood to underrate the mechanical sciences or the arts of life,—all knowledge, according to its kind and degree, is more or less valuable, and in a system of education different studies are necessary to balance the faculties of the mind, and to give each fair play. But to those who would depreciate the more spiritual arts, it is as well to put the question of whether it is always quite clear that the particular sciences which lessen human labor, or add to our sensual luxuries, contribute materially or permanently to the real happiness of mankind. Happiness and its opposite are qualities or condi-

tions more dependent on our inward nature than on external things.

> The mind is its own place, and of itself
> Can make a heaven of earth, a hell of heaven.

The pleasures which all mechanical contrivances can communicate are speedily exhausted. We soon get accustomed to physical advantages: their charm dies with their novelty. We then cease to regard them as an addition to our stock. We might feel indeed their loss (for a time) but we little value their possession. Those high arts, on the other hand, which are addressed to our moral and intellectual nature, which kindle the imagination and touch the heart, which elevate and refine the soul, which teach us how to think and feel, are immediately conversant with all the elements of pure and permanent enjoyment. In the intellectual banquet there is no surfeit—the appetite grows with what it feeds on. The longer we dwell on sublime truths and glorious images and noble sentiments—the longer we gaze on the face of nature and commune with its mysterious beauty—the longer we watch, in a loving spirit, the indications of a higher nature in the finest specimens of humanity—the longer we contemplate the works of God—the more capable do we become of that spiritual delight which lifts us into the atmosphere of religion, and renders us comparatively independent of all grosser cares.

How frequently it happens that things which to the mere utilitarian seem most trivial and transitory, are peculiarly valuable and permanent! He speaks with contempt of the beauty of style in composition, and calls words air—"a trim reckoning!" He thinks stone walls alone are built for eternity. But as Byron said, after Mirabeau, true words are things: and as Hazlitt said, they are the only things that last for ever. Printed words, emblems of true thoughts, can never die. It is not pretended that all words are equally lasting. God forbid that they should be so. The sayings of dunces and idiots must die. Foolish and unmeaning words are fortunately as ephemeral as the dust-like insects that glitter in the sunshine. Those words only

are immortal that have the rare bloom of genius on them, and that embody truth. With the utmost respect for Macaulay's brilliant abilities, I shall continue to think that Socrates and Plato were more useful members of the great family of man than the best shoe-makers in the world. I shall even dare to think that they have contributed more to the moral elevation of their fellow creatures than all the Mills and Benthams of the ninteenth century.

L.—I can hardly believe that Macaulay means what he says—he cannot be serious. Nor can *you* be serious, I think, in speaking so slightingly of science.

H.—No! You must not go away with the idea that I deny in sober earnestness the utility of the mathematical or any other sciences. I am not quite so narrow-minded. Perhaps, if we thoroughly understood each other, we should find that we differ less than we appear to do. Men in argument, and in the heat of opposition, are apt to overstate their case, to run into extremes, and to try to get as far as possible from each other. I merely set myself against the contemptuous treatment of poetry and literature and the fine arts, in which men of science are too apt to indulge themselves. They provoke me to retorts, perhaps too often characterized by that very extravagance and flippancy which I attribute to them. If I have ever said too much in favor of poetry, it is because they have said too much against it.

No. XI.

HAZLITT—THOMSON—WORDSWORTH—TURNER—STOTHARD—PROUT—MARTIN—SCOTT, &c.

L.—I have always forgotten, until now, to ask you how and when you became acquainted with Hazlitt.

R.—I set up a literary periodical in 1827, entitled the *London Weekly Reveiw,* and I applied to Hazlitt, then a stranger, to contribute to its columns, and as he immediately consented to do so, we soon became personally acquainted with each other I recollect at my first interview with him, his laughing very heartily at Buckingham, who wished to engage him on the *Oriental Herald;* but, anxious to drive a good bargain, endeavoured to persuade him that one guinea from that periodical, was equal to two guineas from any other. All Buckingham's ingenious reasoning upon the subject was thrown away. Hazlitt adhered obstinately to his own arithmetic.

L.—There is something so plausible in Buckingham, when he has an object to gain, that I often found myself quite unable to contend with him. He wove a silken spell around me. It was only when I got on the outer side of his door, that I recovered the full use of my faculties. He is certainly a very clever and a very pleasant fellow.

R.—He was an excellent editor for India, and was rapidly making a large fortune by the *Calcutta Journal,* when the Government so cruelly and despotically compelled him to break up his establishment and leave this country. He has not succeeded so well in England. Though on the whole, a lucid and agreeable writer, he is a little too verbose, and has "damnable iteration" in him. When arguing on subjects of great public interest and importance, he is singularly fair and generally right, but he often spoils a good cause by doing too much for it. He dwells

with such minuteness and pertinacity on small matters, and is so anxious not to lose a single advantage, however trifling, that he sacrifices the general effect by a want of prominence in his more important and telling points. He is a pleasing speaker, too, but does not seem to have succeeded in the Senate; though as a lecturer he generally exercises a winning influence over a small assembly.

L.—Hazlitt, I believe, was neither a good orator nor a good talker.

R.—He was a most interesting talker when he felt quite at home. Otherwise he was a *dummy*. But though his conversation was ardent and brilliant, it was impeded by sudden breaks and difficulties. He often seemed to labour with his meaning—to have a painful consciousness of his inability to express it fully. This often made him repeat the same thing in different ways, and sometimes he would stop in the middle of what promised to be a weighty and noble sentence, and baulk his hearers with a lame and impotent conclusion. But the better ments even of such broken discourse always indicated great force and originality of thinking.

L.—I regret that I never knew him. What was his personal appearance?

R.—He was below the middle size, and, from extreme shyness and a morbid sensibility, he had always an awkward and timid air in mixed company. He had a magnificent forehead, and a fine eye; and is said to have been extremely handsome in early life, but care and thought ploughed up his features in manhood. His gait was slouching and his dress slovenly. His hat was generally too large for his head, or put on without the least regard to its shape, the side sometimes usurping the honors of the front. Though anything but a lady's man, he was extremely courteous and polite to those ladies who had the art to make him feel himself at his ease with them. At an earlier period of his life, I believe, he was no enemy to the botttle; but when I knew him he suffered severely from indigestion, and never drank anything stronger than tea, in which he indulged as freely as

Doctor Johnson himself. The tea-pot was on his table half the day. He made his tea so strong that few other people could drink it; and I have no doubt that it affected his nerves and aggravated his stomach disorders. The first day he dined with me, I was vexed to discover that there was not on the table the only sort of meat he could venture upon—a mutton chop; but having discovered this, by mere accident, in good time, I contrived to gratify his fancy before the cloth was removed.

L.—Was he much in London?

R.—He visited the great city I believe pretty frequently, but he generally resided at an old Inn, called the *Hut*, at Winterslow—on or near Salisbury Plain. Here he wrote most of his best essays. When in London, he used to lie in bed very late in the morning, and then sit for hours over his tea. He ridiculed the early-to-rise men, who had nothing to do when they got out of bed, and used to quote Thomson's reply to one who enquired why he did not get up earlier—"Young man," said the poet ("more fat than bard beseems") "I have no motive." And yet in his *Seasons* Thomson complains of sluggards—

Falsely luxurious will not man awake?

L.—It is recorded of Thomson that he would sometimes leisurely eat peaches off a tree in his garden, resting both hands in his waistcoat pockets. But it is wonderful what some indolent men of genius have accomplished—what legacies they have left to mankind. Neither Thomson nor Hazlitt lived in vain.

R.—Hazlitt was the best critic on the Fine Arts that England has produced. He thoroughly understood them, practically and theoretically. He was a painter himself in early life, but he had more judgment than skill, and was so little satisfied with his own performances, that he gave up the art in despair, though I have seen some of his paintings which struck me as indicating decided genius. If my memory is not deceiving me, I once saw in a house in London, his portrait of an old woman, a performance of which he speaks so fondly in one of his essays. I have a more distinct remembrance of a small rough water-color sketch

of himself, from his own hand, on the inner side of the binding of an old volume of his *Table Talk.* It was a capital likeness. I went one day with him to the Water-Color Exhibition in Suffolk Street. He did not seem much pleased upon the whole. He repeated an old pun, declaring that he disliked *Westall* even more than *all West.*

We then went to the National Gallery. He had no sooner entered the front room up-stairs, than his face brightened, and he exclaimed, "Now I am at home!" The living, breathing, speaking portrait of Gevartius on his right—the rich allegorial landscape by Rubens directly facing him—the Claudes, Poussins, and other immortal works glowing on the walls on every side of us, seemed to hold his faculties in enchantment. On our way home we passed a shop-window, in which were two large engravings from landscapes by Turner. "Ah, I once thought," said he, "that Turner would have been a second Claude. But he has disappointed me. There is something imposing in his style, but there is no repose in it. It is theatrical, fluttery, flaunting—it is any thing but Claude-like now. I dislike him, too, as a man.

After all, perhaps, Hazlitt did great injustice to Turner. That artist is not all that Hazlitt might desire, but I am inclined to think that he is still the best landscape painter in England. He is not a Claude, it is true, but if he wants Claude's repose and grace he has more spirit and versatility. If you have seen one of Claude's pictures you have seen them all, exquisite as they are. There is a great sameness and mannerism in them. Some years ago I saw two or three capital pictures by Turner, at the public exhibition of Paintings, got together by the Calcutta Brush Club. I remember that one of them was a view of *Shakspeare's Cliff.* Beautifully and naturally, and yet with something of an audacious spirit, a darkened boat was placed on the very edge of a patch of sunshine. The effect was magical. Turner's contrasts are strikingly felicitous—miracles of art. He has studied the finest and rarest aspects of nature with a determination to startle and delight us until we are almost "dazzled and drunk with beauty."

L.—Does he not sometimes flatter nature ?

R.—Oh that's impossible ! I have often looked upon a few feet of weeds and water glittering in the setting sun, and felt how their beauty would have defied the most exquisite colorist that ever lived. There is, indeed, exaggeration in painting, as there is bombast in poetry, but no poet or painter has yet done full justice to moral beauty, or to the loveliness of external nature.

L.—Painters may improve upon particular and individual specimens, by a judicious selection from boundless varieties, or by new and tasteful combinations ; though, of course, Nature in the abstract cannot be surpassed by Art.

R.—The painting by Turner to which I have been alluding, must have been finished before he changed his style of coloring, and, to the mortification of his admirers, made all his pictures look as if they had been smeared over with the yolk of an egg. He has taken it into his head to look at nature through a pair of yellow spectacles.

L.—I think he too often shows an insolent confidence in his own genius. He takes liberties with Nature. He does not think, with Thomson, that when unadorned she is adorned the most. He is not satisfied with simple beauty, but attempts to gild refined gold and paint the lily. This wasteful and ridiculous excess, is a pretty strong indication of an unsound judgement. There is almost always something meretricious about him. You know Martin ? What sort of person is he.

R.—A most amiable man in private life. He is small in person, but well proportioned ; he has a fine curly head of hair, and his face is what women call handsome. It is almost pretty. His manners are pleasing, but too modest to be quite easy. He is not at all the sort of person in appearance that people acquainted with his paintings only are apt to fancy. His countenance is deficient in dignity and force. This however rather supports the opinion of those critics who maintain that there is in reality no strength of genius in his productions. His mind is not a great one if his features speak the truth.

L.—There is something too like trickery in Martin's vast

architectural perspective. Perhaps it was only a lucky first hit; almost any one can repeat it. He has no other resource. If he has sublimity, it is what Coleridge would call the *material* sublime. His enormous buildings make pigmies of men and angels. The Almighty himself is insignificant in Martin's illustrations of Milton. With him high walls seem more interesting than heroic hearts; he prefers matter to mind; his very heavens are hard and rocky. They are like rough quarries, or horrid cliffs and caverns with patches of glaring light or black shadow.

R.—That Martin is a mannerist is not to be denied. But so is every great painter—and poet too. Has not Milton a manner—noble I grant—but yet a manner? He could not have written plays like Shakspeare, or a mock-heroic poem like that of Pope. It is enough for one man to strike out a new style and to excel all other men in it. This Martin has done.

L.—His engravings have an infinitely finer effect than his paintings, for he is a very tasteless colorist. He is "gaudy not neat." He engraves all his own pictures, and I must say with great skill and freedom. What do you say of Westall?

R—He is too affected. His paintings remind me of the colored prints of shepherds and shepherdesses in fancy costume. They are silly sentimental pastorals. Westall was employed by the booksellers to illustrate Milton's Paradise Lost:—could anything be more ill-judged. Fuseli's extravagancies were bad enough, but they were never feeble. Westall's pictures are sometimes pretty, but they are never powerful. He is a drawing-room artist.

L.—If you do not admire Westall's softness perhaps you like Prout's roughness.

R.—Prout is a nobler artist than Westall; but still he is not a great favorite of mine. He has boldness and breadth of style, but no sentiment or elevation. He is a clever mechanic. He represents admirably what he sees with his fleshly eye, and nothing more. He is the Crabbe of painters.

L.—Did you ever see any of Chinnery's productions?

R.—Yes—there was and perhaps still is a vile portrait of Lord Hastings by Chinnery, in the mess-room at Dum Dum.

His Lordship is made to look like an image carved in wood. All Chinnery's portraits —at least all that I have seen—are hard and coarse. But perhaps I have only seen his earlier productions. Some friends of Chinnery have taken me to task for what they call my prejudice against him as a portrait painter. His landscapes, I admit, are spirited and masterly.

L.—Why, I have always heard him very highly spoken of as a painter of portraits in oils, and a lady of taste was telling me the other day, that his water color miniatures were truly exquisite. What versatility he must possess !

R.—I cannot believe it. I know of no artist who is equally excellent in different departments of his art. Turner is aware that he is no portrait painter, and Lawrence rarely tried his hand at a landscape. Martin piles up gorgeous palaces with a magician's art, but cannot draw man or woman; and Claude, you know, used to get his brother artists to put figures into his landscapes. But I do not wish to speak unkindly of Chinnery. He is not merely a capital Landscape Painter. I am told that he is also a wit of the first water. His puns are "profuse of pleasantness." He is now in China, and was for many years in Calcutta. We have had other English painters of eminence in this quarter of the globe. Beechey (the younger) is still here. Home and Havell were both sojourners, I think, in the City of Palaces. Zoffani was in Bengal for many years. He lived at Serampore, where there are still some of his paintings. He was a German, but seems to have preferred England to his native country. He commenced his professional life in London, by painting the portraits of his Landlord and Landlady, which he exposed on the street door of his lodgings. These caught the eye of Garrick, who was so pleased with them that he ordered a portrait of himself, in the character of *Abel Drugger*. This portrait brought the artist into great notice. Sir Joshua Reynolds bought it for 100 guineas. Sir Joshua subsequently sold it to the Earl of Carlisle for 150 guineas, and handsomely presented the additional 50 guineas to the artist. He was patronized, too, by Hogarth, who recognized something of a kindred genius in him. He had great power

in depicting character. His dramatic portraits were particularly admired. Zoffani painted the whole Royal family of England in one large picture. While in India he painted some pictures for the King of Oude. He returned to England with a large fortune in 1790, and died there in 1810.

L.—The other day I was turning over the beautifully illustrated pages of *Rogers's Poems* and *Turner's Annual Tour,* and had a good opportunity of comparing two artists of such different endowments as Turner and Stothard. It is odd that Rogers should have brought them into such immediate contrast and collision in the illustration of his poetry. Stothard's designs, though executed in his extreme old age, are full of grace, spirit, and invention.

R.—I used to think that his figures had always something false and even absurd about them. He was apparently actuated by a most intense desire to produce classical effects, but he failed from sheer timidity. His style seemed injured by an effeminate fastidiousness, a morbid sensibility. In his horror of straight lines, and his love of curves, he was inclined to exaggerate a grace into a caricature, and make his figures unnaturally round and fantastically elegant. But certainly there was a vast improvement in his latest productions. I think it is Leigh Hunt who says that Stothard was one of the few English artists esteemed on the continent; and, if I remember rightly, he gives it as his opinion that a female figure by Stothard, amongst the illustrations of Chaucer in Bell's British Poets, would have delighted Raffaelle himself. I do not think there is any falling off in Turner's genius as an original artist, though he has gone astray as a colorist. His invention is as rich and true as ever. Look at the engravings, in which you see his designs unstained with false colors. How exquisite they are! There is nothing tawdry or theatrical in *them.* What poetical sentiment! What lively contrasts, and yet what breadth of effect! But never before, perhaps, were pictures transferred to steel for book-embellishments with such success. The burine here rivals the brush in purity and depth of tone. The perspectives are quite

aerial, the suns are brilliant, and the moonlight landscapes are magically soft and shadowy.

L.—Hazlitt was at one time intimate, I believe, with all the leading poets—especially Hunt, Coleridge and Wordsworth.

R.—Yes—and he used to amuse me sometimes with anecdotes of them. He astonished me with his illustration of Wordsworth's almost inconceivable egotism and arrogance. He told me that Wordsworth considered it presumptuous in any one to criticise his writings, however gently. One day, when Wilson, author of *The Isle of Palms*, and Editor of *Blackwood's Magazine*, was on a visit to Wordsworth, a newspaper arrived by post addressed to the latter. It was the *Examiner*. "I suppose," said Wordsworth, "some impertinent newspaper scribbler wishes me to see what he has said of my productions. I despise the censures of these wretches, and am sick of their praise. I shall not look at the paper." "Oh!" said Wilson "give me leave to open it. Let us, at all events, see what is in it. Hah! here is a notice of the *Excursion*—shall I read it?" "Do just as you please." The first sentence was flattering. "Well, that's not badly expressed after all," said Wordsworth. The second was still more laudatory. He smiled benignantly. The third sentence was a climax of commendation. He rose from his seat, took the paper from Wilson's hand, and read the whole notice aloud with a pompous self-complacency. "I think," said Wilson, "I can trace Hazlitt's hand in that notice."

"You are certainly mistaken," said Wordsworth, "Hazlitt, poor wretch, never wrote any thing that was readable." It turned out, however, that Wilson was right. Perhaps Hazlitt in this narration somewhat colored the sober truth.

H.—Hazlitt was not only a capital critic upon poetry and painting, but wrote some of the finest criticisms on the acted drama that were ever published, with the exception of Leigh Hunt's in the *Tatler*, which are inexpressibly delicate and true. I like Lazlitt's lectures on the later English Poets exceedingly. They are highly discriminative and just, but his more ambitious work on Shakspeare's plays, where he comes into direct rivalry with

Schiller is less successful. His praise is too unqualified. It is laid on with a trowel. He cannot discover a single spot in the sun of his idolatry; which was, after all, a particularly "spotty globe." Shakspeare was the best and worst writer that ever lived. Hazlitt's eternal raptures about him at last weary us. Lamb's less pretending dramatic criticisms are more subtile and original.

R.—Yet the Characters of Shakspeare's plays was the only one of Hazlitt's works that came to a second edition in his life time.

L.—That was because Jeffrey praised it in the *Edinburgh*. The attack on it in the *Quarterly*, however, in a great measure, counteracted the good effect of the *Edinburgh's* commendation. Hazlitt used to call Jeffrey the Prince of Critics and of men. When on his death-bed, he wrote to Jeffrey that he was at his last gasp, and wanted pecuniary aid. Jeffrey sent him £50. This anecdote I met with in one of the Monthly Magazines. I cannot vouch for its truth. Are you quite sure that no other work of Hazlitt's, besides that on Shakespear, came to a second edition in his life time.

R.—Now that you recall the subject to my mind, I am inclined to believe, that the Lectures on the Poets also came to a second edition. If Lamb be the more subtile critic, as was just observed, Hazlitt was the sounder one. Lamb was sometimes "high fantastical," and over-rated the illustrious obscure of the olden time. He was not fond of praising those whom every body praised. Hazlitt had strong plain sense as well as higher faculties. Though not a poet—wanting the accomplishment of verse—he had a poet's feeling. He says he once tried his hand at a sonnet, but he could not put a rhyme into the eighth line, so as to complete the two quatrains. He gave it up in despair. His *Life of Napoleon* was, perhaps, his greatest performance. It was his last also. He died before he could write the preface. The work throws a new light on many important points in the history of Napoleon and his times. The originality and power of the author's mind have given even to the most familiar materials

an air of novelty and freshness. Those who have been accustomed to look upon Napoleon as a monster, will derive little pleasure from the work; and will, perhaps, accuse Hazlitt of strong partialities and inveterate prejudices. If a detestation of tyranny, a passionate love of liberty, and a profound respect for intellectual greatness, were inconsistent with impartiality and candour, he could not be defended from the charge; but an historian may, surely, deserve general applause, though he is no Tory, nor a believer in the divine right of Kings, so long as he states facts as he finds them, and supports the cause of truth and justice. Hazlitt is an historian of this class, and his indignation against the enemies of freedom and mankind need not be attributed to prejudice or party spirit.

L.—It may have been expected by some, that his ardent and well-known admiration of Napoleon would insensibly lead him to compose an apology or panegyric, while he deceived himself with the idea that he was engaged upon a history; but it is rightly observed in the preface, that he has sacrificed no principle to palliate his hero, and he has rigorously examined and fearlessly blamed him on all just occasions. But even supposing him to be not without a bias, it is, at all events, on the generous side; and if, in the contemplation of so brilliant and wonderful a character as that of Napoleon Buonaparte, he betrays a peculiar satisfaction in recognizing his nobler traits, this peculiarity may be advantageously opposed to the unworthy attempts of Sir Walter Scott to tarnish the glory of Napoleon's greatest actions by a resuscitation of the most paltry libels, and his ready belief in every testimony, however slight, that is calculated to injure his memory as a man, a soldier, or a statesman.

H.—The Life of Napoleon by Sir Walter Scott, is not only more voluminous, but it must also be conceded, that it is more picturesque, and more lively and entertaining than Hazlitt's. It has, however, too much the air of a romance, and is too diffuse in its style, and too irregular and ill-digested in its details, to be regarded as an historical composition. Though Hazlitt's previous habits as a writer did not seem favorable to that connected train of thought, and severe simplicity of expression, so

requisite in a work of this nature; it cannot be denied, that he has succeeded to admiration. He had previously distinguished himself as an essayist, a metaphysician, and a critic, and his final labours will stamp his reputation as a philosophical historian. In this last character his views are original, profound, and just, and his style ardent, rapid, and energetic. He rarely introduces those sparkling images and that florid diction, which glow so profusely in some of his other writings, but which would be inconsistent with the dignity of history.*

L.—Sir Walter Scott characterizes Napoleon's proclamations as mere bombast, (because they are opposed to the dry, formal style adopted by ordinary conquerers and rulers) but Mr. Hazlitt justly considers them brilliant specimens of military eloquence; and certainly their effect upon such vast masses of human beings as they were sometimes addressed to, is a better criterion of their merit than the criticism of any single individual. But Scott never loses an opportunity of depreciating one of the greatest men of modern times, merely because he was a rankling

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* Hazlitt, in a brief essay published in the *London Weekly Review*, (*On the Causes of Popular Opinion*,) in reply to some attack upon him in another periodical, accounts for his adoption of a *florid* style. "Till I began to paint, or till I became acquainted with the author of *The Ancient Mariner*, I could neither write nor speak. He encouraged me to write a book, which I did according to the original bent of my mind, making it as dry and meagre as I could, so that it fell stillborn from the press, and none of those who now abuse me as a *catchpenny* writer have so much as heard of it. Yet let me say that that work contains an important metaphysical discovery, supported by a continuous and severe chain of reasoning, nearly as subtle and original as any thing in Hume or Berkeley. I am not accustomed to speak of myself in this manner, but impudence may provoke modesty to justify itself. Finding this method did not answer, I despaired for a time; but some trifle I wrote for the *Morning Chronicle*, meeting the approbation of the editor and the town, I resolved to turn over a new leaf—to take the public at its word, to muster all the tropes and figures I could lay hands on, and, though I am a plain man, never to appear but in an embroidered dress." Bulwer characterizes the essay Hazlitt speaks of (*Essay on the Principles of Human Action*) "as a work full of original remarks and worthy a diligent perusal." Sir James Mackintosh had an equally high opinion of it. It was written in the author's 18th year.

thorn in the side of legitimacy, and seems, on all occasions, predetermined not to give him a single sous. He earnestly defends the conduct of Sir Hudson Lowe at St. Helena, and repeats his praise of General Gourgaud, as a "loyal soldier," because, instead of, like the rest of Napoleon's followers, taking part with his master against the governor, he acted as a spy, and, after having been "very communicative" while on the Island, on his arrival in England, hurried to the Foreign Office, and pretended to make a frank and full disclosure of every thing that he had heard and seen during his residence with Napoleon. Such conduct as this calls forth from Sir Walter Scott not a single syllable of reprehension; but, on the contrary, he affects to credit all this traitor's libels against his confiding and noble-minded master. He cannot conceal, however, from his reader the fact, that Gourgaud's conscience afterwards smote him for his base ingratitude, and that "he resumed that tenderness for Napoleon's memory, which may induce him to regret having communicated the secrets of the prison-house to less friendly ears." He takes care to add, that "this change of sentiment can neither diminish the truth of his evidence, nor affect our right to bring forward what we find recorded as communicated by him." As if this remorse were not in some degree an argument against the truth of his former statements, though the sole circumstance of their coming from the lips of a betrayer of his master in misfortune, without any consideration of the subsequent change of feeling, would have been quite enough to make any writer, not wholly blinded by prejudice, reject it with disdain. There are but too many indications of this ungenerous spirit, this gross disingenuousness in Scott's misnamed History of Napoleon. In his account of the unfortunate affair of the Duke d'Enghien, he says, that the grave had been prepared before the sentence was pronounced, and being obliged, in a note, to acknowledge that Savary has flatly denied this, he adds—"it is not of much consequence." But it *is* of much consequence, and Sir Walter Scott thought so, too, or why should he have mentioned it at all after it had been publicly and positively contradicted?

H.—It is curious, though distressing, to observe how ingeniously the accomplished novelist colours and distorts facts that are in any way connected, however remotely, with his own political feelings and opinions.

L.—We are naturally the more grieved at these misrepresentations, because they do not pass away like the idle wind, when proceeding from so eloquent and popular a writer,—one who, in his own line, is without a rival, and whose private character is so eminently pure and amiable. If Hazlitt has colored any of his details,—though I doubt it much—his leaning, as I have already observed, is, at all events, on the right side. A strong admiration of intellectual power, and a burning indignation at every attempt to check the progress of freedom, might be pleaded in extenuation of a much graver sin.

H.—Hazlitt was the dramatic critic in Perry's paper—the *Morning Chronicle*—and first brought Kean into notice. Kean's first appearance on the London Stage was in the character of *Shylock* in the *Merchant of Venice*. "He had not been many minutes before me," said Hazlitt, "when I discovered that a man of genius had alighted on the boards of Drury. I went home and wrote a most laudatory critique upon him. Perry trembled for his paper. He feared the praise was too decided, and that the *Chronicle* would stand alone in its opinion. His other critical friends had spoken slightingly of the new actor. Perry was right. The *Chronicle did* stand alone for a little while. But true genius is irresistible. Kean soon became the most popular actor of modern times."

And factions strove who should applaud him most.

L.—John Kemble, however, did not lose his admirers. He charmed the public to the last with his Roman dignity and classical precision. Hazlitt's theatrical critiques, as I think one of you was just now remarking, are not quite equal to Leigh Hunt's. Hazlitt's have more gravity, strength, and decisiveness, but they exhibit less sensitiveness and subtlety, and are less felicitously descriptive.

H.—Nothing indeed can surpass the truth and beauty and originality of Hunt's descriptions. Let me read to you a part of one of his notices, in the *Tatler*, of Paganini's performances on the violin.

Last night he began a composition of his own, (very good by the way,) an Allegro Maestoso movement, (majestically cheerful,) with singular force and precision. Precision is not the proper word, it was a sort of peremptoriness and dash. He did not put his bow to the strings, nor lay it upon them; he struck them as you might suppose a Greek to have done when he used his plectrum and "smote the sounding shell." He then fell into a tender strain, till the strings appeared to *shiver with pleasure*. Then he gave us a sort of *minute warbling*, as if half a dozen humming birds were singing at the tops of their voices, the highest notes *leaping off* and *shivering like sprinkles of water*; then he descended with wonderful force and gravity into the bass; then he would commence a strain of earnest feeling or entreaty, with notes of the *greatest solidity yet full of trembling emotion*; and then again he would leap to a height beyond all height, with notes of desperate minuteness, then flash down in a *set of headlong harmonies, sharp and brilliant as the edges of swords*; then warble again, with inconceivable beauty and *remoteness*, as if he was a ventriloquizing bird; and finally, besides his usual staccatos in ordinary, he would suddenly throw handfuls, as it were of staccatoed notes, in *distinct and repeated showers over his violin*, small and pungent as the tips of pins.

In a word, we never heard any thing like *any* part of his performance much less the least marvel we have been speaking of. The people sit astonished, venting themselves in whispers of 'Wonderful!'—'Good God!'—and other similar unusual symptoms of English amazement; and when the applause comes, some of them take an opportunity of laughing, out of pure inability to express their feelings otherwise.

L.—I should perhaps be inclined to object to a few expressions here and there, but upon the whole, this description is almost as great a marvel as Paganini's music. A writer must feel his own strength, and make very sure of the intelligence and sympathy of his readers, before he can venture on such bold and hazardous illustrations.

H.—Paganini seemed to have made a strong impression on Hunt's mind. He has commemorated his matchless musical feats in a blank verse poem, in which he calls him *The pale Magician of the bow*—

—With his mournful look
Dreary and gaunt, hanging his pallid face
'Twixt his dark flowing locks, he almost seemed,
To feeble or to melancholy eyes,
One that had parted with his soul for pride,
And in the sable secret lived forlorn.

L.—I recollect nothing at all equal to Hunt's prose description of Paganini's performances, unless it be Crashaw's *Music's Duel,* (from Strada) which is a wonderful illustration of a poet's power of language. Take a few specimens—

————Now negligently rash
He throws his arm, and with a long drawn dash
Blends all together, then distinctly trips
From this to that, then quick returning skips
And snatches this again, and pauses there.

Trails her plain ditty in one long-spun note,
Through the sleek passage of her open throat,
A clear unwrinkled song.

————Her supple breast thrills out
Sharp airs, and staggers in a warbling doubt
Of dallying sweetness.

————Out of her breast,
The ever-bubbling spring, the sugared nest
Of her delicious soul.

So said, his hands, sprightly as fire, he flings,
And with a quavering coyness tastes the strings

From this to that, from that to this he flies,
Feels music's pulse in all her arteries.

H.—These are beautiful passages certainly. But to return to Hunt. Is he not the most original observer of familiar things that we have yet had? It was said of Swift, with exaggerated praise, that he could write a fine poem upon a broomstick: but certainly Hunt could write an exquisite essay upon even a worse subject. Swift's humorous prose article entitled *Meditations on a Broomstick,* I suppose, suggested the compliment to his verse. Hunt has a delightful paper on a common pebble that his foot

encountered in the road. In that sort of *easy* essay, which it is so difficult to write, he is without an equal. Observe how he describes the simple incident of a half-starved strange dog following his heels, on a wet day, through the streets of London:—

> A dog follows us. Will nothing make him 'Go along?' We dodge him in vain; we run; we stand and '*kish*' at him; accompanying the prohibition with dehortatory gestures, and an imaginary picking up of a stone. We turn again and there he is, *vexing our skirts*. He even forces us into an angry doubt, whether he will not starve if we do not let him go home with us. Now if we could but lame him without being cruel:—* * * * Oh, come, he has turned a corner—he is gone; we think we see him *trotting off at a distance, thin and muddy*; and our heart misgives us.

Let us look at another specimen of Dutch painting, or something better, for it is not merely literal truth, but reality made clear by the light of imagination. Here is a description of a parlour fire;—"A minute coil *clicks* in the burning coal, while every now and then the light ashes shed themselves below, or a stronger, but still a gentle flame *flutters up with a gleam over the chimney*—

> At length the *darker objects in the room become mingled*; the gleam of the fire *streaks with a restless light the edges of* the furniture, and reflects itself in the *blackening window*; while his (the contemplator's) feet take a gentle move on the fender and then settle again, and his face comes out of the general darkness, earnest even in indolence, and *pale* in the very ruddiness of what it looks upon. This is the only turn, perhaps, at which sheer idleness is salutary and refreshing. How observed with the smallest effort is every trick and aspect of the fire! A coal falling in—a fluttering fume—*a miniature mockery of a flash of lightning*,—nothing escapes the eye and the imagination. Sometimes a light flame appears at the corner of the grate like a quivering spangle—sometimes it swells out at top into a restless and brief lambency; anon it is seen only by a light beneath the grate, or it *curls around one of the bars like a tongue, or darts out with a spiral thinness* and a sulphureous *and continued puffing, as from a reed.* The glowing coals meantime exhibit the shifting forms of hills, and vales, and gulfs,—*of fiery Alps*, whose heat is *uninhabitable even by spirit*, or of black precipices, from which swart furies seem about to spring away on sable wings;—then heat and all is forgotten, and walled towns appear, and figures of unknown animals, and far distant countries, scarcely to be reached by distant journey;—then coaches and camels, and barking dogs as large as either, and forms that combine every shape and suggest every fancy;—till at last, *the ragged coals*

tumbling together, reduce the vision to chaos, and the huge profile of a gaunt and grinning face seems to make a jest of all that has passed.

But Hunt's greatest merits are not exquisite truth of description and delicacy of criticism, (though in these respects he is almost without a rival) but cheerful wisdom, and a fine humanity, wide and warm as the summer air on the hills at noon. He teaches us to

Find tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
Sermons in stones, and good in every thing.

Leigh Hunt's powers as a poet are now better understood and more generally appreciated than they were a quarter of a century ago, when it was the fashion amongst certain Northern critics, to ridicule and abuse him, in company with his gifted friends Keats and Shelley. How many of those picturesque words and lovely images, which are only at a true poet's command, are thickly scattered over all his verses. Let us glance at two or three brief specimens—

The lightsome fountain starts from out the green,
Clear and compact; till at its height o'errun
It shakes its loosening silver in the sun.

———

————A goat loose wandering,
Or a few cattle looking up askance,
With ruminant meek mouths and sleepy glance.

———

I have noted oft
That eyes, that have kept dry their cups of tears,
The moment they were touched with music's fingers
Trembled, brimful.

———

FROM STANZAS TO HIS SICK CHILD.

Sleep breathes at last from out thee,
My little patient boy;
And balmy cares about thee
Smooth off the world's annoy.

I sit me down and think
Of all thy winning ways,
Yet almost wish with sudden shrink,
That I had less to praise.

Thy sidelong pillowed meekness,
Thy thanks to all that aid,
Thy heart in pain and weakness
Of fancied faults afraid ;
The little trembling hand
That wipes thy quiet tears,
These, these are things that may demand
Dread memories for years.

Leigh Hunt talks as pleasantly as he writes, with the same abundance of illustration and the same curious felicity of expression; and, unlike Hazlitt, is perfectly free from the awkwardness and reserve which are thought characteristic of authors. He is easy, elegant, polite and cordial. With Shelley's beautiful tribute to his character, (in the form of a dedication,) let us take our leave of him for the present.

Had I known a person more highly endowed than yourself, with all that it becomes a man to possess, I had solicited for this work, the ornament of his name. One more gentle, honorable, innocent and brave ; one of more exalted toleration for all who do or think evil, and yet himself more free from evil; one who knows better how to receive and how to confer a benefit though he must ever confer far more than he can receive; one of simpler, and in the highest sense of the word, of purer life and manners I never knew; and I had already been fortunate in friendship when your name was, added to the list.

No. XII.

THOMAS CAMPBELL.

H.—How is it that we have no memoir yet of Thomas Campbell ?*

L.—It is odd that his death should have excited so slight a sensation, after so long and distinguished a literary life. Dr.

* Since this was written, the papers have announced Beattie's Life of Campbell as nearly ready.

Beattie promised the public some account of his distinguished friend, but his heart seems to have failed him, or the booksellers are not disposed to look favorably on a Memoir of the poet as a trade speculation.

H.—I cannot believe that a good life of Campbell would be coldly received by the public, for, even if he had survived his popularity, his long association with literature and literary men, would make any tolerably animated and accurate memoir of him extremely interesting. It is somewhat strange that Campbell, notwithstanding his strong political feelings, should have escaped the Quarrels of Authors, and have steered clear of all angry collision with critics and brother poets, meeting with nothing but courtesies and compliments from all quarters, even when public criticism was most partial, personal, and corrupt, and yet be denied the usual protection of the grave. The ghouls of slander have raked up his ashes, and are still feasting upon them; nor has one generous friend come forward to scare away these filthy creatures from their sacrilegious repast.

L.—Perhaps, we cannot be quite sure that all the ill-things said of him are untrue—though probably the worst of them are exaggerated by envy and malice. Campbell was cautious and prudent, both as a poet and as a man. I recollect that —— used to tell me Campbell was an Atheist, and that he was eaten up with literary jealousy.

H.—I do not believe a word of it. His poetry is not the poetry of an Atheist, nor of a mean-hearted man.

L.—Why, —— was his intimate associate for many years. They were rarely a day without meeting. Did you know R——g? He was sub-editor of the *New Monthly* when Campbell was editor, and did nearly all the work, for which Campbell got both the credit and the cash. It is certain that Campbell was but too fond of that after-dinner *male* conversation, which Walpole used to encourage at his own table, because he said all could join in it, the subjects treated of being safe ones—open questions, and equally within the reach of all capacities. "When his critiques and his Virgilianisms were over," says Leigh Hunt of Campbell,

"very unlike a puritan he talked!" though, according to the same authority, there was a puritanical aspect about his prim mouth.

H.—Campbell's features, and the general character of his head, were *prim*, I admit, but they had nothing of a puritanical severity about them; though until he was warmed with wine there was something reserved and restrained in his manner, as if he were a little too conscious of authorship, and too much afraid of any breach of the minor proprieties. But I am satisfied that he had a warm and kind heart, and was full of those generous sentiments which abound in his writings. One of his greatest slanderers, after attributing to him every evil quality of the heart, adds that he was vulgarly ugly—a falsehood, which throws discredit on every thing that has fallen from the same pen. Campbell was eminently handsome, and his general expression was highly intellectual. I am alluding to a vile article in the *Dublin University Magazine*, entitled *Personal Recollections of Thomas Campbell,* and which seems to have excited much less attention than I should have expected. I should have thought that so shocking an insult to the memory of a popular poet, scarcely yet cold in the grave, would have called forth the loudest notes of indignation from the public press. Even if the charges brought against Campbell were believed to be founded in truth, there should have been some expression of public sorrow. His friends might, at least, have complained of the bad taste and bad feeling exhibited by an anonymous assailant, who, standing over the remains of a gifted being, that has left a rich legacy to mankind, ostentatiously presents to the world a list of his failings and errors when he can sin no more.

L.—The charge of bad taste and inhumanity may fairly be brought against him who, with a shout of triumph, draws the "frailties" of the departed, from their "dread abode."

H.—In this case the motive may be even more base than that of malice to the dead;—this attack upon the defenceless may have been, not the result of passion, but the cool performance of a wretch, who merely calculated the effect of his labours at a certain number of pence per line.

L.—Can you make any guess at the author of the libel?

H.—None whatever. All I know is that either the author of *The Pleasures of Hope* was the meanest of mankind, or his Magazine-biographer deserves the knout to be applied to his own back, with greater force than an ordinary hand could wield it. What could have led the editor of the *Dublin University Magazine*, to give insertion to such a paper? Whether true or false, it was unworthy of publication. If Campbell had personal failings—let their magnitude be what they might—they were a secret to the public, and were in no degree connected with his poetical labors. He left no line which, dying, he could wish to blot. There was no occasion to lessen the influence of his works, by casting odium on his personal character. They breathe a love of truth and freedom. They uphold the dignity of virtue. They console the victims of foreign despotism, and they thrill the breasts of Englishmen with the proudest national associations. We wish not to be told—even if it were the melancholy truth—that he who sang of "Nelson and the North"—that he who has spoken in words that "stir the heart like the sound of a trumpet"—of

> The flag that braved a thousand years
> The battle and the breeze

was "a miserable dwarf," "a small thin man, with a remarkably cunning and withered face, and eyes cold and glassy like those of a dead haddock."

L.—Is it possible that such Billingsgate personality as this should have found its way into a respectable literary periodial? I never saw Campbell. Is the portrait of him, by Sir Thomas Lawrence, a likeness?

H.—A most faithful one.

L.—Well, that is both a gentlemanly and handsome countenance, though a little "*prim*" nevertheless.

H.—Leigh Hunt describes his features as "regular" and "his eye as lively and penetrating." He was, indeed, a little below the middle size, but he was well made, and any thing but that

miserable dwarf in person, which his assailant must be in mind. Campbell's tone and manner in public speaking were certainly somewhat methodistical, though a methodistical sentiment probably never fell from his classic lips. As a speaker, he disappointed me. His words were well chosen, and his matter, though sometimes a little too ostentatious and high flown, was always worth listening to; but his manner was unpleasing. I allude to formal speeches. At his own fireside he was in every respect a delightful talker, and no poet ever spoke with more zeal and generosity of his contemporaries. The statement in the *Dublin Magazine* of Campbell's mental and personal defects, is not softened by one word of regret, that so gifted a writer should have been so mean a man. The libeller riots in imaginary filth. Like a jackal at the grave, he eagerly exhumes his victim, and mangles every limb with a horrid joy. They are not, however, the honored relics of the poet on which he gorges,—he feasts on the creature of his own foul imagination. The whole article bears internal evidence of falsehood. It is impossible that the man who created *Gertrude of Wyoming*, and penned some of the subtlest and soundest criticisms in the language, could have uttered the hideous and vulgar nonsense that is attributed to him by the anonymous author of the *Personal Recollections*. We are called upon to believe that he observed of Petrarch, that "he was a detestable donkey, and, though I have edited his memoirs, I say it. The fellow must have been mad, or a fool, or a liar. The latter is most probable." We are told, that he spoke of Cervantes as "that most lugubrious and dull jester, to read whom in the original, poor old Lord Camden devoted his dotage." He is represented as saying that Byron was "a liar," "and in heart and soul a blackguard," and implying that he was something of a coward! Allan Cunningham, according to this libeller's edition of Campbell's conversation, was "the most infernal liar that ever left Scotland;" Hazlitt, "of all the false, vain, selfish blackguards that ever disgraced human nature, was the falsest, vainest and most selfish;" "Northcote, the sculptor fellow, was a conceited

old booby;" Shelley, "a filthy Atheist;" Milton, "a savage minded wretch;" and Gray, "a selfish scoundrel," "a harmless dirty beast." Now which is most credible—that the author of the *Pleasures of Hope*, and some of the most refined and elegant criticisms in the language, a man universally esteemed in his life-time, who was treated with uniform respect and good-will by all his literary contemporaries, should have uttered these insane atrocities, or that his anonymous assailant has strained his invention, to fill his pockets, or to gratify his malice? If Campbell had really been the violent and vulgar wretch that he is here described to be, we should not, at this day, have been told of it for the first time, nor would he, as even his libeller acknowledges to have been the case, have "dined at home, perhaps less than any man in London; for to the last he was courted by the highest and noblest in the land."

L.—I am not sure that there was not some littleness of feeling in Campbell's conduct at Holland House, when he requested his friends to carry all their incense to Lord Byron, and I can never approve of his volunteering, after Byron's death, to take up the cause of Lady Byron, and so stating his case as to leave a cloud of an awful character hanging over Childe Harold's untimely grave. He says that the cause of the separation was such that it could not be stated in print, and that Dr. Lushington, when he heard of it, observed, that it was impossible that Lord and Lady Byron could ever come together again as man and wife, and that if any parties desired to effect such a reunion, he, for one, would have no hand in it. Is it not a deadly cruelty to deal in such insinuations as these?

H.—I have no doubt, it was a gallant feeling towards the lady that urged him to his task, and, if I remember, he spoke handsomely enough of Byron in other respects.

L.—Yes—but with strange inconsistency; for if Byron were guilty of any thing approaching to the degree and kind of criminality which he leaves the reader to dream of, or guess at, Campbell ought to have been ashamed to breathe his name unless with execration.

H.—This separation-question is still a puzzle, and will always remain one. Moore ought to have settled it. He surely had the means of doing so; but he passes it over in silence, though he had promised his friend and brother poet to protect his memory.

L.—If the criminality were of the kind that Campbell insinuates—not to be mentioned to ears polite—not to be put in type —how was it that Moore, supposing him to know every thing, could still love the memory of such a criminal?

H.—By the way, where is this attack on Byron—How was it published?—I forget all about it.

L.—It appeared many years ago, in a Magazine edited by Campbell, the article itself being signed with his name. Do you understand Leigh Hunt's insinuation, in the preface to his second edition of "Lord Byron and his Contemporaries"—"*I have something very awful to say on that point in case it is forced from me.*"

H.—I do not understand it, and do not wish to do so. It is a sad thing that men like Hunt and Campbell should deal in such ambiguous charges. But let us change the subject.—I think I have never called your attention to my box-full of autograph letters. I rather pride myself upon them, and one of these evenings I will show you the whole collection; though it would take you many evenings to read them all. Here is an unpublished letter from Campbell to Sir J. Sinclair, who had suggested to him a subject for a play. The letter does honor to the modest and manly feeling of the writer. From a memorandum on the back, you will see that it was received by Sir J. Sinclair on the 17th of July, 1806, at which period Campbell was in his 29th year. He had published his *Pleasures of Hope* six or seven years before.

SIR,

I beg leave to present you my most sincere acknowledgements for the honor you have done me, in sketching so full and finished an outline of a dramatic work for my use, and my most respectful assurance, that I shall always regard this instance of your attention, as a flattering mark of distinction, from the quarter from which it has come. I am prouder of the

favor of a true patriot, than I should be of the plaudits of courts and kings. I think the subject of *Darius* by no means unfavorable for poetical effect, and a train of scenes, such as you have laid down, might be filled up by a poetical hand with very great success. But I am afraid, I am indeed certain that that hand, and that success are not destined to be mine. I am engaged, Sir, in the midst of very indifferent and precarious health, in those avocations, which, being more certain than poetry, are better fitted for those immediate interests, which, as the father of a family, I now find it my duty to cultivate, and poetry, which always demands free agency, would not prosper in my hands, if I sat down to it as a business. My hours of leisure, are, from the state of my constitution, devoted to healthful exercise, or to ease, and not to poetry, as they once were.

Wishing you prosperity in the numerous and public spirited objects of your attention; I am, Sir,

Gratefully and respectfully,

Your very humble servt.

THOMAS CAMPBELL.

L.—Have you no more of Campbell's letters?

H.—None of any importance, with the exception of a letter which he wrote to me, on a subject of too private a nature even to show to you. Here are three notes of his—the first is addressed to Allan Cunningham, the second to D. L. R., and the third to Leitch Ritchie, who has been called by the *Atlas*, "the Scott of the brief Romance." They are interesting as autographs, but in no other point of view, except indeed as they may serve to show that men of genius indite ordinary compliments and excuses in much the same style as other people. The handwriting, you will observe, is neat and gentlemanly, (if I may use the expression) with something of the clearness and precision of his style in poetry.

Tuesday, 30th January, 10, *Seymour-Street, West.*

MY DEAR CUNNINGHAM,

I was at the Athenæum to-day, where I was seized with a shivering fit, and since coming home I have had a renewed attack of rheumatic pains.—I regret exceedingly, that I have no hope of being so well to-morrow as to be able to join your party—I must defer the pleasure till my health is restored. Mrs. Campbell joins me in best remembrance to yourself and Mrs. Cunningham.

Yours very truly,

T. CAMPBELL.

10, *Upper Seymour-street, 27th June*, 1827.

MY DEAR SIR,

It is entirely an oversight, that my name was not put upon the copy of my works that was sent to you—but I must say, that you have shown symptoms of very generously forgiving me for the mistake.—I have to thank you also for a number of the *London Weekly Review*, which does me but too much honor. With sincerity,

I remain, dear Sir,

Your much obliged friend,

T. CAMPBELL.

To David Lester Richardson, Esq.,
54, Norton-street, Burton Crescent.

Friday, 10, *Seymour-Street, West.*

SIR,

It is with the utmost regret I have to inform you, that, having been two days ago attacked with an uncommonly severe cold, I feel to-day my throat so inflamed, my head so racked with pain, and my fever so increased, that I really do not anticipate being able to-morrow to share in the party that is to offer so deserved a token of regard to Mr. Richardson. I beg it, however, to be made known to my friend, Mr. Richardson, and to all our friends, who shall meet on this occasion, that I feel the inability to join them, still more than the pain of my present indisposition—but, though absent in person, I am with them in spirit.*

I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,

T. CAMPBELL.

To Leitch Ritchie, Esq.

L.—Campbell does not seem to have possessed a very hardy constitution, though he lived to the age of 64, and was not, I hear, particularly abstemious in his diet in pleasant company.

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* Mr. Campbell, however, did contrive, after all, to attend the public literary dinner here alluded to.

No. XIII.

LORD BYRON AND HIS LADY.*

L.—Since we last met, I been hunting for that article of Campbell's, in defence of Lady Byron. It was published in the *New Monthly Magazine*, for April, 1830.

H.—Well, as I suppose you have re-perused it, let us have some account of it.

L.—Campbell has made no revelations of importance. In the number of the *New Montly Magazine*, immediately preceding that in which his defence of Lady Byron, duly signed with his name, is published, there had appeared a very laudatory notice of Moore's Life of Byron. Yet Campbell himself, in speaking of Moore's work, calls it "*one of the most injudicious books that was ever published,*" and says, that he "*hated to wade through it.*"

H.—How came he then to insert a commendatory notice of it in the *New Monthly?* I now remember seeing a letter of Campbell's to Moore, in which he warmly gave him a thousand thanks for the kind things which he had said of him in his *Life of Byron*, but requested his forgiveness, if he animadverted on a single passage, in which Lord Byron is said to have implied, that on one occasion, at Holland House, Campbell was envious and pettish.

L.—This apparent inconsistency has an awkward look; but Campbell gives an explanation of it. He says that he consented to insert the laudatory notice, not written by himself, and even expunged a passage censuring Moore for unfairness to Lady Byron, partly because he was unwilling to offend him, partly because he did not then believe Lady Byron to be so perfectly justifiable in the separation, as he afterwards found her to be; and partly because he had himself scarcely dipped into the cen-

sured parts of the book. But Lady Byron had since "*spoken out.*" He alludes to Lady Byron's *Remarks* on Moore's book. But her Ladyship does not, I think, *speak out* very clearly after all. Some anonymous writer has fiercely attacked Campbell for inserting a review of a book in his periodical, without first reading the book himself.

H.—Oh, that is absurd! He would make the task of editorship an impossible one. In every extensive critical journal there is necessarily a division of labour. Campbell very rarely wrote the notices of new publications. They were chiefly written by Cyrus Redding, (the sub-editor—a man of known talent,) assisted by a corps of able and trust-worthy contributors.

L.—Lady Byron seemed exceedingly anxious to protect her relations from the charge of having persuaded her to "*desert*" her husband, after an amicable separation, then expected to be a comparatively brief one, and after she had written him a very cheerful and cordial letter. The affectionate and lively tone of that letter was adopted at the suggestion of Dr. Baillie, to whom she had communicated her suspicions that Lord Byron was actually deranged.

H.—I cannot help wishing that Lady Byron had preserved her first delicate and dignified silence.

L.—But who can blame her for breaking it?

H.—She might, at all evênts, have been satisfied with denying that her relations had caused or advised the separation. Her evasion of an explanation of the exact nature of Byron's offence, after so many horrible rumours, while she asserts that if it was not excusable on the score of madness, it was impossible to hold further intercourse with him, has had a blasting effect upon poor Byron's memory.

L.—It was hardly to be expected, that she should quite reconcile herself to the thought of having her name handed down to posterity, as the sole cause of the unhappiness of a man, who had treated her in a way that rendered it utterly impossible for her to live with him.

H.—I do not think there was any necessity for Lady Byron to

come forward on her own account. Lord Byron had repeatedly acknowledged that the fault was not hers, and those acknowledgements were honestly recorded by Moore.

L.—Yes, but Moore's book, according to Campbell, produces, upon the whole, a very unfavorable impression of Lady Byron's character.

H.—Oh, Moore merely implies that she was a little too cold and prudish for the companionship of such a man as Byron. But, at all events, if she was determined to speak at all, she should have been somewhat more explicit.

L.—Lady Byron, in a letter to Campbell, says, "But is it reasonable that you should believe me, unless I show you what were the causes in question? *And this I cannot do.*" And Campbell himself says, "to plenary explanation, Lady Byron ought not—she never shall be driven. Mr. Moore is too much of a gentleman not to *shudder at the thought of that.*"

H.—This is perplexing, indeed.

L.—The world will conclude that the conduct of Byron must have been of a peculiarly black dye, or there would hardly have been so much reluctance on the part of the lady and her friends to speak out.

H.—The subject I suppose is one that is not very easily discussed in a public print.

L.—"I have learnt a few facts," says Campbell, "but my readers need not fear that I shall inflict them on their delicacy."

H.—If it were mere conjugal infidelity, or any ordinary conjugal crime, the matter could soon be made intelligible without offending the most fastidious reader.

L.—One of these days I suppose some of her friends, obtaining, by some means or other, all the particulars of the case, will be goaded to that plenary explanation, to which Campbell says Lady Byron "ought not, and shall not be driven." The greatness of Lord Byron's genius, should not be set against Lady Byron's personal character, in a question relating only to morals. "I found my right," says Campbell, "to speak on this painful subject, on its now irrevocable publicity, and who has brought

it to this state, but Mr. Moore? It is now the theme of millions, and the cause of much misconception. Why should Lady Byron be crushed, as is well enquired, under the tombstone of Byron? I yield to few in my admiration of Lord Byron as a poet, and have some sympathies for him as a man; but I do not think his personal character should be upheld at the expense of that of an excellent and unhappy woman. Lord Byron has himself declared that "there never was a better, nor even a more kind or more amiable and agreeable being than Lady Byron!" If Moore insinuates that she was not suited to Lord Byron, he pays a bad compliment to his hero. Campbell, a man of integrity and good taste, and knowledge of the world, gives her a similar character;—"Let me tell you, Mr. Moore," says he, "that neither your poetry, nor Lord Byron's, nor all our poetry put together, ever delineated a more interesting being than the woman whom you have so coldly treated. This was not kicking the dead lion, but wounding the living lamb, who was already bleeding, and shorn unto the quick." Because the man who abused a husband's power, and who acted in a way that is deemed too shocking to relate, was a poet—and is now in his grave—the living widow is to be sacrificed, and her friends silenced! The idea is monstrous. What strikes me as most curious in Mr. Campbell's defence of Lady Byron, is his great anxiety not to be thought the accuser of his *friend* Byron, except in so far as is necessary for the illustration of her Ladyship's unblameableness. "The true way," says he, "of bringing off Lord Byron from this question of his conjugal unhappiness, would be his own way, namely, to acknowledge frankly this one, perhaps the only great error of his life. Acknowledge it, and, after all, what a space is still left in our minds for allowance and charity, and even for admiration of him!" Now, from this sentence one would conclude, that the crime—"the one great error"—imputed to his Lordship, cannot be of so horrible a nature, as the mysterious allusions to it in other parts of Mr. Campbell's article, would lead people to imagine. Again, he says, that "he is well convinced that Lady Byron was justified

in the parting, by circumstances which Lord Byron had either forgotten, or, with all his manly candour, had failed to state to Mr. Moore." How could his Lordship have forgotten a crime too horrible for Mr. Campbell to mention in print? And where was his manly candour if he recollected it, and yet omitted even to allude to it when inculpating Lady Byron?

H.—To me the whole affair is still a mystery. I cannot catch a single ray of light. I regret Moore's obstinate and suspicious silence. He reprints, in his life of Byron, her Ladyship's *Remarks*, without a single word of comment. It was surely his duty to settle the question, if possible, and clear his friend's memory from the thick vapour that has gathered round it.

L.—It can hardly be supposed that Mr. Moore, so intimate an associate of the noble poet, who was remarkable for his lavish confidence, and his inability to preserve a secret, should be wholly ignorant of the real circumstances of the case, unless there was something in Lord Byron's conduct of so black a character, that, contrary to his ordinary habits, a guilty conscience, a sense of shame or a dread of infamy, compelled him to be silent. It is true that Byron complains, that the charges against him were not specific, and seems to dare enquiry, but he might have felt himself supported under the knowledge that the crime of which he was guilty could never be publicly explained.

He, at all events, knew that there were "horrible rumours" about him, and people are apt to conclude, that any man, if perfectly innocent, has it in his power to meet even rumours, in a way that would convince his calumniators, that he was determined to bring his character into open daylight. Hunt's mysterious insinuation, wrung from him, as it were, in bitter self-defence, connected with the equally mysterious allusions of Lady Byron and her champion Campbell, have left many of Byron's friends in a state of uneasy doubt, that it was incumbent on Mr. Moore, as far as he was able, to satisfy or allay. Moore observes, in reference to these rumours—"Any mistakes or mis-statements I may be proved to have made shall be corrected;—any new facts which it is in the power of others to produce, will speak for

themselves. To mere opinions I am not called upon to pay attention—*and still less to insinuations and mysteries.*" As Lord Byron himself is no longer able to meet "insinuations," or explain "mysteries" injurious to his reputation, it is certainly the duty of his friend and biographer to do as he would be done by, and defend his character against assaults, not the less deadly because they are dark and undefined.

H.—One of Moore's Reviewers has accused him of writing a book which, under the pretence of doing honor to Byron, was intended, in reality, to injure his fame. Of course, there is not a shadow of truth in this charge, but it shows to what misinterpretation Moore has exposed himself by his unaccountable silence.

L.—Mr. Moore cannot, without unreasonable presumption on his part, affect to treat such opponents as Campbell and Lady Byron, with a feeling of contempt, and, therefore, his silence must injure either himself, or the noble poet, or both. If he really has it in his power to offer a satisfactory explanation or defence, he ought to be ashamed to leave the character of his friend to the tender mercies of calumniators. The effect of his general eulogies, interesting and valuable as they are from such a source, will, no doubt, be regarded by many as greatly invalidated by his mysterious evasion of a full discussion of so important an incident in the life of Byron, as the conjugal separation. If this silence be occasioned by the consciousness of his Lordship's guilt, and an unwillingness to acknowledge it, Mr. Moore's extravagant and enthusiastic admiration is misplaced, inconsistent, and even immoral; and if, on the other hand, he has reason to believe Byron a calumniated man, he should stand boldly over his grave, and defend his memory with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his strength.

H.—Lord Byron once expressed to Mr. Moore his impression that his lady had "a fixed hostility" to him, which could not rest, he thought, even at his grave;—"so strong was this impression on him," says Mr. Moore, "that, during one of our few intervals of seriousness, he conjured me by our friendship, if, as he both felt and hoped, I should survive him, not to let unme-

rited censure settle upon his name, but, while I surrendered him up to condemnation, where he deserved it, to vindicate him where aspersed." If Byron has received "unmerited" censure from his lady and Mr. Campbell, how has Mr. Moore performed the sacred duty imposed upon him by this pathetic appeal? May not his silence, after this, look very like "surrendering up his friend to condemnation?"

L.—I suspect that Campbell knew very little more than the public did or do—and that is little more than nothing. All that we really know of the matter is, that Byron's conduct to his lady was of a nature that she thought nothing but lunacy could excuse, and that Dr. Lushington, the only person, perhaps, to whom the whole secret was communicated, pronounced that a reconciliation was impossible; and observed, that, even if it had been possible, he would have been no party, professionally or otherwise, to promote any attempt to effect it.

H.—Byron seems to have been, what he called Burns, a compound of "dirt and deity." But what earthly idol is *all* gold? It is possible that Dr. Lushington's decision, had reference to eccentric violence of temper, and not to any unspeakable atrocity. With our present knowledge only of Byron's character—that is, all we know with *certainty* of it—and making a fair and generous allowance for those errors of conduct and opinion, which were engendered or fostered by his unhappy circumstances—I am still inclined to exclaim

Byron, with all thy faults, I love thee still.

L.—And, after all, it is only just and charitable to remember, that nothing of a very hideous nature has yet been *proved* against him; nothing beyond those indiscretions and immoralities which will bear to be spoken of, however much they may deserve our censure. It is far from impossible, that if the whole truth were told, a very large portion of the odium now attached to the name of Byron, with reference to his character as a husband, might be shown to have arisen from the false delicacy of the lady, who, by refusing to state Byron's actual fault, on the

ground of its unmentionability, has set the imaginations of men at work to raise up some horrible picture of depravity, a thousand fold more shocking than the reality. As both Moore and Campbell, who were behind the curtain, at least more so than we are, had still so much admiration in reserve we have hardly a right to be more rigidly severe. We know that Byron was capable of noble actions, though he was any thing indeed but a *model-man.*

No. XIV.

BRITISH FEMALE AUTHORS.

R.—In no age—in no country—have there been so many female authors of distinction as within the last hundred years, and within the watery walls of Great Britain and Ireland. The scientific Mrs. Somerville—the masculine-souled, but feminine-hearted Miss Martineau—the lively Lady Morgan—the pathetic Caroline Bowles (now Mrs. Southey)—the judicious and instructive Mrs. Edgeworth—the fine-minded, critical, Mrs. Jameson—the dashing Fanny Kemble, (now Mrs. Butler)—and the learned Miss Barrett—the eloquent and impassioned Mrs. Shelley (the celebrated daughter of a celebrated father, and the 'adored wife' of one of the most imaginative of modern poets)—the melancholy Mrs. Norton—the pious Hannah More—the sensitive and gentle Mrs. Tighe—the vigorous Joanna Baillie—the gay Lady Blessington—the humorous Mrs. Trollope—the all-accomplished Lady Dacre—the metaphysical Lady Mary Shepherd—the fashionable Mrs. Gore—the pastoral Miss Mitford—the melodious Marchioness of Northampton—and Louisa Twamley, and Mrs. Poole, and Mrs. Elwood, and Lady Francis Egerton, and Mrs. Dawson Damer, and the Marchioness of Westminster, and the Marchioness of Londonderry, and Mrs. Cameron (of the

Oriental City of Palaces),—and Mrs. Austin, and L. E. L. and Lucy Aikin, and Mary Howitt, and Miss Lee, and Sara Coleridge, and Miss Holmes, and Mrs. Taylor, and Camilla Toulmin, and Miss Brooke, and Miss Lowe, and Miss Jewsbury, and Emma Roberts, and Miss Hamilton and Miss Pardoe, and Miss Jane Porter, (and to go back a little)—Mrs. Barbauld and Mrs. Inchbald (" the two bald women")—and Miss Carter and Mrs. Piozzi, and Madame D'Arblay and Anna Seward, and Mrs. Opie, and Charlotte Smith, and Mrs. Ratcliffe, and more than I have breath to utter, have proved triumphantly, and in spite of Mahomet, that ladies have souls as certainly as men, and that they can turn their faculties to as good account.

L.—It is true that there is no deficiency of numbers in the ranks of the Blue Stockings, but I fear that the greater familiarity of feminine fingers with so dirty a liquid as printer's ink, has, in too many instances, led to the blotting out of the more delicate and attractive graces of the female character. I have sometimes met angels in a printer's pandemonium, and I could not help feeling that they had descended from their proper sphere. I remember seeing Letitia Elizabeth Landon surrounded by the devils. It was a sorry sight. I think the female intellect decidedly inferior to that of man. Do you recollect Johnson's remark—a woman who writes poetry (or preaches a sermon, I forget which he alludes to,) is like a dog walking on its hinder legs ; it does it ill, but we are surprized that it can do it at all ?

R.—Poor L. E. L. was to the last as truly feminine as the most " un-idead girl" in a country village. I am surprized and sorry to see a person of your good sense adopt the old prejudice against all exhibitions of strong and independent intellect in woman! How many clever females are there that are doomed to die old maids, simply because they have sounder brains than the majority of males. Men do not like to *look up* to women—they like to look *down upon* them, and nurse and pet and protect them, as if they were little children or animated dolls.

L.—Men do not dislike clever women merely on account of their cleverness, but because they are apt to give themselves

airs on that account. Speaking generally, it is a fact that your clever women make bad wives, and are deficient in the gentleness and amiability which characterize the majority of the sex.

H.—I doubt that greatly. A friend of mine, who had the pleasure to know many highly-gifted women, used to tell me that they were all singularly amiable and domestic. He particularly mentioned the names of Mrs. Somerville, Mrs. Jameson, Mrs. Hemans, and Mrs. Southey. It is true that Mrs. Hemans was parted from her husband; but it was from no fault of hers. You know what sort of man her husband was. She acted the part of a most affectionate and careful mother to his children to the day of her death, having supported them during her life entirely by her pen. I remember the sub-editor of the *New Monthly Magazine*, (in Campbell's time) telling me that she received a guinea for each of her smaller poems contributed to that Magazine, without reference to the precise number of the stanzas, and I suppose she obtained the same payment from other periodicals for which she then wrote. This accounts for the extraordinary number of her small occasional pieces, and it is interesting to know that, besides giving delight to thousands, they brought bread to father-deserted children. Lady Byron, too, was a blue-stocking—a mathematician even—and yet her husband acknowledged, after their separation, that a brighter or *more amiable* being never existed.

L.—Nevertheless, Byron has many sneers at Blue Stockings.

R.—Of cheerful and estimable old maids, who have won distinction in literature there is no scarcity in these times, when the ancient prejudice against the improvement of the female intellect is fading away, like a thousand others, before the advancing lights of knowledge. Joanna Baillie was delightful as an associate to the simple-mannered Sir Walter Scott, and you must remember, L——, what pleasant evenings we have passed with those happy young-hearted, old maiden sisters at Jersey, who wrote a pleasant book, entitled, if I recollect rightly, the *Odd Volume*. Though struggling with many difficulties, their good spirits seem never to desert them for a moment, and their hearts are ever open to the claims of others.

R.—Moore's doctrine of the unfitness of genius for domestic life is utterly untenable. How many literary men and women now living are known to be not more distinguished for their genius than for their domestic amiability. Mrs. Hemans (to speak of the recently dead,) was one of the most anxious and affectionate of mothers—a loving sister—and a faithful friend—and who can doubt that she would have been the best of wives, had her unhappy husband given her the opportunity to be so. I have just been looking over some of her letters published in Chorley's life of her. How delightfully she speaks of Wordsworth's domestic habits! As the book is at hand let me read a few passages from her letters from Rydal Mount.

Rydal Mount, June 24, 1830.

I am charmed with Mr. Wordsworth himself; his manners are distinguished by that frank simplicity which I believe to be ever characteristic of *real* genius; his conversation, perfectly free and unaffected, yet remarkable for power of expression and vivid imagery; when the subject calls for any thing like enthusiasm, the poet breaks out frequently and delightfully, and his *gentle and affectionate playfulness in his intercourse with all the members of his family*, would of itself sufficiently refute Moore's theory, in the *Life of Byron*, with regard to the unfitness of genius for domestic happiness. I have much of his society, as he walks by me, while I ride to explore the mountain glens and waterfalls, and he occasionally repeats passages of his own poems, in a deep and thinking tone, which harmonizes well with the spirit of these scenes.

Mrs. Hemans observes, in a subsequent letter, speaking of Wordsworth, "He has been singularly fortunate in long years of untroubled peace—domestic peace and union." I believe that Moore's own domestic circle furnishes the strongest refutation of his theory.

H.—Mrs. Hemans's portrait of the great poet of the lakes is highly interesting and does him great honor, though I could wish she had not so often to record his recital of his own poems.

R.—Oh! there is a daily beauty in his life that a little innocent egotism of this sort cannot sully.

L.—If his admiration of genius in others were as ardent and as liberal as his appreciation of his own! But I meet with no warm tributes from Wordsworth to any of his contemporaries.

Byron tells us (and says he can give his authority for the anecdote) that Wordsworth spoke very scornfully, even of his old friend Southey's genius, and once exclaimed "*After all, I would not give five shillings for all that Southey has ever written.*" Wordsworth has publicly praised the great Scottish peasant, but there was a *true* simplicity, and a manly clearness and directness in all Burns's productions, which make Wordsworth's artificial theory of the natural so supremely ridiculous, that I cannot believe he has any real and cordial regard for poems so unlike his own. In one of Mrs. Hemans's letters, she tells us that on asking Wordsworth if Carlyle had not overrated the celebrated war-song of "*Scots, wha hae wi' Wallace bled,*" he replied—"I am delighted to hear you put the question;—overrated?—trash—stuff—miserable inanity! without a thought—without an image!" He then recited the piece "in a tone of unutterable scorn, and concluded with a *Da Capo* of 'wretched stuff!'"

R.—Oh! you must not measure too nicely the hasty critical sayings of literary men, in moments of irritation. Mrs. Hemans, in more than one of her letters, expresses herself charmed with Carlyle's critique on Burns, though she may have thought that he overrated the particular poem alluded to. Here is one of her passages on the subject before she knew who the critic was.

> I have been delighted with the paper on Burns, which you were kind enough to lend me: I think the writer has gone further into the heart of the mystery than any other, because he, almost the first of all, has approached his subject with a deep reverence for genius, but a still deeper for *truth;* all the rest have seemed only anxious to make good the attack or the defence. And there is a feeling, too, of the still small music of humanity throughout, which bears upon the heart a conviction full of power that it is listening to the voice of a brother. I wonder who the writer is; he certainly gives us a great deal of what Boswell, I think, calls 'bark and steel for the mind.' I, at least, found it in several passages; but I fear that a woman's mind *never* can be able, and never was found, to attain that power of sufficiency to itself, which seems to be somewhere or other amongst the *rocks* of a man's.

L.—I like that concluding sentence—it is a frank and im-

portant confession, from one of the most gifted women of the age.

H.—I do not know that I can view it in quite the same light. Had Joanna Baillie or Mrs. Somerville made such a confession, it would have been more to the purpose. Mrs. Heman's intellect, with all its excellence, was still feminine, and had far more grace than strength.

R.—Critics are too apt to associate feebleness with polish, and strength with coarseness. I believe if Mrs. Hemans's verses had been less graceful, many critics would have thought them more powerful. I am tempted to read to you a letter from Walter Savage Landor, which not only does great honor to Mrs. Hemans, but to some other lady authors of the day. As to the compliment to our friend D. L. R. you may be certain that he appreciates it as he ought to do.

Bath, Feb. 5.

MY DEAR SIR,

I receive at this instant your most valuable present.* No volume contains so much of sound, of sensitive, and of generous criticism. How many are there who would turn into ridicule the word *sensitive*, applied to criticism? But there never was true criticism without that faculty, on any of the higher works of the human mind.

I never had the happiness to know Mrs. Hemans, and the extracts I had seen from her poems were only sufficient to prove that no poet, not Dryden himself, had ever made the rhymed couplet so harmonious. But, when I had resolved to read all her volumes, I found, to my amazement, two poems which alone would place her far above her contemporaries in sublime pathos —I mean *Casa Bianca* and *Ivan.*

We have no poet now living, or living lately, who unites the two great requisites of poetry—imagination and energy. Southey had the first, and wanted the second; Byron had the second, and wanted the first. But he has written one poem of surpassing beauty, in which the line recurs,

A change came o'er the spirit of my dream.

I do not believe that there ever was an age in which so many good poets (I dare not say excellent) were contemporary. There are three or four women, at the very least, who have written much better poetry than Sappho's

* The *Literary Leaves*, the two volumes bound in one.

of which we certainly have the best. There is a night-scene in a novel of Mrs. Norton's, incomparably superior to the foolishly vaunted φερείς οινον, φερεις αιγα, φερεις ματερι παιδα.

But in these matters you can teach the world more than I can. I shall read your book over again with fresh pleasure, not because I think any of its beauties has escaped me, or that I have forgotten any, but because I now am honored by the friendship of so judicious, so honorable, and so independant a man.

Believe me, my dear Sir, your very obliged.

W. S. Landor.

D. L. Richardson, Esq.
Greenfield House, Jersey.

L.—A very characteristic and interesting letter. But I do not quite agree with the writer in his estimate of Mrs. Hemans's couplet measure. As to Mrs. Norton's novel, I do not know its name, or to which of her prose fictions he alludes, and indeed I never fell in with any of them.

R.—Mrs. Hemans's verses are always musical. Perhaps you have never read *Casa Bianca*. It is a truly spirited and pathetic production. After Landor's praise of it, you may like to hear it read.

CASA BIANCA.

[Young Casa Bianca, a boy about thirteen years old, son to the Admiral of the *Orient*, remained at his post, (in the battle of the Nile,) after the ship had taken fire, and all the guns had been abandoned; and perished in the explosion of the vessel, when the flames had reached the powder.]

The boy stood on the burning deck,
  Whence all but he had fled;
The flame that lit the battle's wreck,
  Shone round him o'er the dead.

Yet beautiful and bright he stood,
  As born to rule the storm;
A creature of heroic blood,
  A proud, though child-like form.

The flames rolled on—he would not go,
  Without his father's word;
That father, faint in death below,
  His voice no longer heard.

He called aloud—"say, Father, say!
If yet my task is done?"
He knew not that the chieftain lay
Unconscious of his son.

"Speak, Father!" once again he cried,
"If I may yet be gone!"
And but the booming shots replied,
And fast the flames rolled on.

Upon his brow he felt their breath,
And in his waving hair;
And looked from that lone post of death,
In still, yet brave despair.

And shouted but once more aloud,
"My father! must I stay?"
While o'er him fast, through sail and shroud,
The wreathing fires made way.

They wrapt the ship in splendour wild,
They caught the flag on high,
And streamed above the gallant child,
Like banners in the sky.

There came a burst of thunder sound—
The boy—oh! where was he?
—Ask of the winds that far around
With fragments strewed the sea—

With mast, and helm, and pennon fair,
That well had borne their part—
But the noblest thing that perished there,
Was that young faithful heart.

L.—These are fine verses certainly. Mrs. Hemans has written many poems of more pretension, but none with so much simplicity and power. Her poems are generally too artificial stately and ornate for my taste. I prefer Joanna Baillie to all other British Poetesses. Though a little too plain and prosaic at times, she has always some *substance* in her compositions. I allude particularly to her dramatic verse. Her *Plays on the Passions* are wonderful productions for a female pen, they are not always merely masculine and energetic. She sometimes

strews flowers in the reader's way, that are as fresh and delicate as those of poets who are fonder of fanciful illustrations. How beautiful is her description of a solitary cloud—

> As if an angel in his upward flight
> Had left his mantle floating in mid-air.

R.—I forgot to mention just now, that in Chorley's memorials of Mrs. Hemans, there is a letter of hers to Mr. G. F. Richardson, the translator of Korner and author of *Poetic Hours*. The concluding paragraph will not be understood by the general reader. I need not tell either of *you*, that G. F. R. is no relation of D. L. R. Here is the paragraph—

I will not apologise to you, for the mistake respecting your name, which has had the agreeable consequence of introducing to me your own elegant '*Poetic Hours*.' Allow me to assure you, Dear Sir, of the pleasure I should have in seeing you here, should any thing induce you to visit this country; and believe me to be, very truly,

Your much obliged,

Rhyllon, St. Asaph, July 25, 1827. FELICIA HEMANS.

Mr. Jerdan, editor of the *London Literary Gazette*, when sparring with the editor of the *London Weekly Review*, had inserted a letter in the *Gazette*, to which he attached Mr. G. F. Richardson's signature: that letter expressed a hope, that G. F. R. might never be mistaken for D. L. R. Well—G. F. R. immediately wrote to the editor of the *London Weekly Review*, to disclaim the letter attributed to him. Here is part of what he said.

The truth is, I never wrote such a letter at all, and Mr. Jerdan must have got it up as one of those jokes which, like ill-contrusted fire-works, sometimes go off to the injury of the inventor. To convince you of the accuracy of my statements, I can assure you I have been constantly mistaken for Mr. D. L. R. Mrs. Hemans, in the first letter I received from her, says, "*You must not suppose me unacquainted with your former publications; many beautiful sonnets bearing your name, and quoted in various reviews and periodical works have become known to me.*" The *Monthly Magazine* of Feb. 1826 evidently mistook me for him, and Mr. Lupton Relfe actually sent me '*Friendship's Offering*' intended for my name-sake. For the opinions I have expressed of Mr. D. L. R's. poetical talents, which I really much admire, though the advertising has caused me some trouble in asserting my own identity, I

could refer to my friends, Mrs. Hemans or Mr. Horace Smith, but, not to trouble them, please ask Mr. Lupton Relfe to show you a letter of mine, of December last, acknowledging the receipt of the Annual, as sent by mistake, in which I spoke as I feel of Mr. D. L. R's. productions.

This very small fragment of very small literary history shows the inconvenience of two contemporary writers having only one surname between them. I am told that James Montgomery and Robert Montgomery complain of similar mistakes. But to return to the subject of genius in domestic life. How affectionate and how beautifully written are Shelley's letters to his wife! He seems to have perfectly idolized her. Leigh Hunt is one of the best of husbands and of fathers. Mr. and Mrs. Southey, like Shelley and his wife, and William and Mary Howitt,* were both of them literary and imaginative, and yet how happily and affectionately did they live together! Southey's private life was as pure and harmonious as his verses. Nothing can be more exquisite than those passages in his poems which refer to his domestic felicities. Caroline Bowles was his second wife, and he had known her intimately for twenty years before their marriage, and had repeatedly paid a glowing tribute to the character of her poetry. As we have just read a specimen of Mrs. Hemans, let me call your attention to a few stanzas from an exquisitely true and pathetic little poem by Mrs. Southey—better known by her maiden name of Caroline Bowles. In my opinion, she is by far the most natural of our British poetesses.

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* The Howitts are enthusiastic lovers of literary pursuits, and anxious to educate their children in the best possible manner, and therefore live a retired and domestic life....The love of literature was the origin of their acquaintance, its pursuit has been the hand-in-hand bond of the most perfect happiness of a long married life; and we may further add, to the honor of womanhood, that while our authoress sends forth her delightful works in unbroken succession, to the four quarters of the globe, William Howitt has been heard to declare, that he will challenge any woman, be she who she may, who never wrote a line, to match his good wife in the able management of a large household, at the same time that she fills her own little world of home with the brightness of her own heart and spirit.—*New Spirit of the Age.*

"No purer models of our genuine home-feeling and language," says a critic in the *Quarterly Review,* "could be placed in a young foreigner's hand than Mrs. Southey's works."

STANZAS TO A DYING INFANT.

Sleep, little Baby! sleep!
  Not in thy cradle bed,
Not in thy Mother's breast
Henceforth shall be thy rest,
  But with the quiet dead.

Yes, with the quiet dead,
  Baby! thy rest shall be—
Oh! many a weary wight,
Weary of life and light,
  Would fain lie down with thee.

Flee, little tender nursling!
  Flee to thy grassy nest—
There the first flowers shall blow,
The first pure flake of snow,
  Shall fall upon thy breast.

Peace! peace! the little bosom
  Labours with shortening breath.
Peace! peace! that tremulous sigh
Speaks his departure nigh—
  Those are the damps of Death.

I've seen thee in thy beauty,
  A thing all health and glee;
But never then wert thou
So beautiful, as now,
  Baby! thou seem'st to me.

Thine upturn'd eyes glazed over,
  Like harebells wet with dew—
Already veil'd and hid
By the convulsed lid,
  Their pupils darkly blue.

Thy little mouth half open,
  The soft lip quivering,
As if, like summer air,
Ruffling the rose leaves, there
  Thy soul were fluttering.

Mount up, immortal essence!
Young spirit! hence—depart!
And is this Death?—Dread thing!
If such thy visiting,
How beautiful thou art!

Oh! I could gaze for ever
Upon that waxen face,
So passionless! so pure!
The little shrine was sure
An angel's dwelling place.

Thou weepest, childless Mother!
Ay, weep—'twill ease thine heart—
He was thy first-born-son—
Thy first, thine only one—
'Tis hard from him to part.

'Tis hard to lay thy darling
Deep in the damp cold earth,
His empty crib to see,
His silent nursery,
Late ringing with his mirth.

To meet again in slumber
His small mouth's rosy kiss,
Then—waken'd with a start,
By thine own throbbing heart—
His twining arms to miss.

And then to lie and weep,
And think the live-long night,
(Feeding thine own distress
With accurate greediness,)
Of every past delight.

Of all his winning ways,
His pretty, playful smiles,
His joy at sight of thee,
His tricks, his mimickry,
And all his little wiles.

Oh! these are recollections
Round mother's hearts that cling?
That mingle with the tears
And smiles of after years,
With oft awakening.

* * * * * * *

H.—I have seen a long poem of Mrs. Southey's, entitled *The Birthday*, which all the critics agree in praising as her noblest performance, but, for my own part, I greatly prefer her smaller pieces.

R.—I have a letter of her's, written before her marriage to Southey. It is addressed to the author of *Literary Leaves*. It pays so beautiful a tribute to Southey's character, and defends it with such generous zeal, tempered with so much candour and courtesy towards his critic, that I cannot resist the pleasure of reading it to you.

Buckland, January 10, 1838.

SIR,

It may seem paradoxical to say, that if the book (the *Literary Leaves*) you have had the goodness to send me had pleased me less, I should have acknowledged it sooner; and yet, in truth, it is so:—for on glancing through its pages, with the intention of returning my immediate thanks, I soon perceived, it was not a work to be so carelessly discussed. I found my attention irresistibly arrested by the poetic portion (the *true* poetry), and that the prose essays, abounding in interesting matter, were too ably written to be run over with the eye only.

Now, after a leisurely perusal of the whole, and a re-perusal of very many of the beautiful poems, I can thank you, Sir, with heartfelt sincerity, for your very valuable present: one that will oftener lie by me (like a familiar friend) in summer bower and by the winter hearth, than be found with the things done with in the dusty repose of the book-shelf.

Having thus honestly spoken my cordial feelings of admiration and gratitude, I must assume to myself the liberty of commenting, somewhat reproachfully, on certain paragraphs in the prose essays, wherein you allude to Mr. Southey, in terms you would probably be eager to retract, could you become aware, on personal acquaintance, how complete is your misconception of his character: an intimate friendship of twenty years' standing, has entitled me to profess some knowledge of that character; and, on the strength of that knowledge, to assert, with the seriousness of one deeply impressed with the all-importance of truth, that I believe him in the nobleness of his nature only less eager to acknowledge and appreciate contemporary talent, than to distinguish and revere moral excellence.

Throughout your poetry, Sir, I trace so much of the spirit which breathes in his, I cannot help whispering to myself—'oh! that good men should so misconceive each other!' I persuade myself you will not think the worse of

me for my plain speaking, but rather, on the strength of it, give more credit to the assurance that I am indeed very thankfully

Your obedient Servant,

CAROLINE BOWLES.

To D. L. Richardson, Esq.

H.—Mrs. Southey has just published "*Robin Hood: a fragment*," written partly by herself, and partly by her distinguished husband. It was projected so long ago as 1823, and the design was in that year communicated to Mrs. Southey, (then Caroline Bowles.) This interesting intellectual union, which so long preceded the closer tie, is beautifully alluded to in the letter from Southey, in which he first explains his proposal to her to associate herself with him in the composition of the ballad. It was proposed to keep the united authorship a secret.

"The secret itself," writes Southey, "would be delightful while we thought proper to keep it; still more the spiritual union which death cannot part.

"Now, on your side, there must be no hesitation from diffidence. You can write as easily and as well as I can plan. You are as well acquainted with forest scenery, and with whatever is required for the landscape part, as I am with the manners of the time. You will comprehend the characters as distinctly as I have conceived them, and, when we meet, we will sort the parts, so as each to take the most suitable, and I will add to yours, and you shall add to mine, whatever may improve it.

"Beaumont and Fletcher composed plays together with such harmony of style, thought, and feeling, that no critic has ever been able to determine what part was written by one, or what by the other. Why should not Robert and Caroline succeed as well in the joint execution of a poem?

"As there can be no just cause or impediment why these two persons should not thus be joined together, tell me that you consent to the union, and I will send you the rude outline of the story and of the characters."

The writers unfortunately, I think, selected the irregular unrhymed metre of *Thalaba*—which is very ill adapted for a ballad. Southey took the battle scenes, and his lady-coadjutor "the women, and children, and forest." The fragment consists of two parts, the first by the gentleman, and the second by the lady—both parts are picturesque and animated, in spite of the unsuit-

able versification. "Every one will regret," says the *Atlas*,* "that the work remains unfinished, and we cannot resist the suggestion, however fruitless we feel it to be, that Mrs. Southey could not employ her own admirable talents more happily, than in completing a design to which she has already contributed not a few of its most successful passages."

No. XV.

RESERVE—A CHARACTER.—A SCHOOL-FELLOW.

L.—You were speaking the other day of the shyness and apparent coldness of ——— in society.

H.—Yes, you never meet with that sort of reserve in a Hindu.

L.—Reserve of manner is equally characteristic of one of the most enlightened and of one of the most barbarous nations in the world—the English, and the North American Savages. Whether it arises from the same cause or not in both cases, I can hardly pretend to determine. But the general opinion seems in favor of the theory that Reserve is the child of Pride. Vanity is loquacious and communicative. Certainly the English are the proudest nation living, and the North American Indians are not much behind them. If English pride be in some degree a defect, it has more dignity than the vanity of the French. The pride of the North American Indian "savors nobly," and makes the stoic of the woods surpass in manly fortitude the stoic philosophers of antiquity. It is perhaps more easy to account for national reserve than the reserve of individuals, for, with respect to particular persons, it in some cases arises from very peculiar feelings.

H.—I have studied the character of an acquaintance of mine with very close attention, and as, from long association with him,

* A paper now edited by a gifted and accomplished writer—John Kaye—well-known to the British Indian community.

I have contrived occasionally to lift the curtain of his soul, and see what is hidden from society in general, I think I may venture to explain the nature of his reserve. He is a bachelor about the age of forty-five. He has not a single near relation, nor a single friend. It is true that I have come into long and close contact with him, but, communicative and cordial as he has been with me by fits and starts, I am by no means sure that he regards me as any thing more than an old *acquaintance*. For my own part, I have a great respect for him, but very little affection. His general manner is cold and guarded—though never wanting in courtesy and consideration. If I did not know him so well as I do, I should pronounce him pitifully selfish, and incapable of friendship or of love. He seems always self-concentrated.

L.—He must be an odd sort of fellow to associate with.

H.—The fact is, that he is a close and severe observer of human character, and is exceedingly fastidious in the selection of the objects of his regard. In youth, he used to fall in love or friendship at first sight; but repeated disappointments, arising from the after discovery of defects, has rendered his mind anticipative of evil. He thus remains a bachelor—and stands alone in the wide world. The primary cause of his reserve is an odd mixture of pride and humility. He has eminently distinguished himself both in literature and science, but especially in the latter. He is rather a personable man than otherwise, but has feeble health, and is sickly-looking, and has one slight deformity of which he is so sensitively ashamed that he hates to talk to a man who looks him full in the face. He has the same morbid feeling on this point, as Lord Byron had about his lame foot, who was ready to knock a man down whom he caught observing it. He has a foolish fancy too that the majority of his associates are inclined to look with "jealous leer malign" upon his pretensions as a student, and that they do not and cannot regard him as *one of them*—but consider him, when he appears amongst them, as a mere intruder—and make him an object of ridicule or censure in his absence. It is a great mistake; for, with all his reserve, he has never uttered an offensive word nor done an unkind

action, and his society has been sedulously courted, both by men and women, until they have found their endeavours to melt him into sociality a hopeless task, and left him to his solitude.

L.—It is not to be denied that this sort of determined reserve in a man is rather trying to the pride of others, for though it may be associated with external courtesy, it implies something like contempt for, or, at least, a feeling of cool indifference towards them.

H.—He has accordingly made some enemies and no friends, though, on account of his elegance and refinement of mind, many would be proud to be numbered in the list of his intimate associates. His accomplishments, however, are not such as make a show in general society. He has made some discoveries in science, and has written verses of exquisite melody and pathos, and has a wide acquaintance with literature; but he has no readiness of expression in mixed company, nor presence of mind, and is not up to that miscellaneous talk regarding the topics of the day, often replete with useful information, in which men of general intelligence indulge when they meet together. He feels his deficiency most acutely, and this feeling, connected with his physical debility, and a consciousness of something wrong in his personal aspect, makes him shrink back into his own shell at the slightest touch, and with a nervous irritability.

L.—To whom do you allude?

H.—I would rather not tell you. If this man had an affectionate wife and cheerful children to greet him, he would be as happy as he is now miserable. No man hates solitude more than he does—no man would love society more if he had more confidence in his own acceptableness,—and no man would cherish more devoutly an affectionate partner or a true friend. He pines under a sense of loneliness. He feels that he has lived in vain—as much so as if he had been born and bred in a desert. He is passionately fond of children, and never sees a happy married pair with a group of little laughing faces around them, without a heart-ache. He has a most lively appreciation of the exquisite comfort and felicity of domestic life, and yet continues to live, and will pro-

bably die a bachelor. In every large society there must be many such characters, who merit rather the sympathy or compassion of good men, than that unkindness or ridicule which they too often excite, amongst the malignant and the thoughtless.

L.—A few days ago I met poor Allan ———. He took me quite by surprise. You know we were old school-fellows.

H.—An old school-follow is a sort of a relation—a school is a family, the members of which are linked together in after life by an almost fraternal tie, and the most agreeable associations. I know nothing more exciting than an accidental and unexpected meeting in a foreign land, with one who sat on the same form with us in boyhood.

L.—Poor Allan! how his familiar face startled me with a revival of the past! It came upon me like an early dream, and made the actual scenes around me a dim and disregarded vision. But very undreamlike were his stout frame and his hearty shake of the hand. "We met—'twas in a crowd"—a crowd of dark visages with white turbans. At such a moment we could have little sympathy with a foreign multitude. We thought but of the familiar faces in dear old England. Allan readily accepted my proposal to take a mutton chop and a glass of iced ale or claret under my own roof. He was famous in his school-boy days for his patronage of the itinerant venders of delicious viands.

H.—The child is father of the man.

L.—I found that Allan was not very communicative or sentimental, until he had done more than ordinary justice to the table. He then began to think less of himself and more of his old playmate. He told me a thousand pleasant stories of the past, that made me exclaim with Coleridge—

Oh! that once more I were a careless child!

He has a wonderful memory; and I had to thank him for the revival of many little matters connected with my own juvenile history, that but for him had been buried in eternal oblivion. The particulars which I best remembered of poor Allan, as a boy, were his egregious but harmless vanity, his admiration of his own legs,

and the mortification which his dignity endured from the slightest personal chastisement. He one evening burst into a laugh while the master was reading prayers, and was condemned to be flagellated for his profane and ill-timed merriment. In those days, the old indecent system of applying the birch was in full fashion. I was desired to hoist the delinquent on my back. As he was larger, and heavier, and stouter than myself, this was an impossible task; but poor Allan dropped his inexpressibles down to his ancles, and exposed those legs which he so much petted and admired to the criticism of a hundred eyes. Such a strong sense of the pitiable ludicrousness of his position seized him at this critical moment, that, with the courage of desperation, he turned round upon his tyrannical pedagogue, and, with an air of offended dignity, remonstrated against so indecent and degrading a punishment. The despot stared at him in silent astonishment, while Allan, drawing up his trowsers, solemnly assured him that he would submit to no corporal punishment or further personal exposure. There was a gravity, a stateliness and pomposity about Allan in his serious mood, that prodigiously heightened the effect of every ridiculous accident that befell him. The pedagogue did not long remain in his trance of astonishment. He rang the bell for Thomas, an athletic man-servant of all work. When Thomas appeared, he was ordered to hoist up Master Allan, who, while struggling manfully with the servant, and with an obstinate courage, perfectly awful in the eyes of his silent schoolmates, came in violent collision with a book-case, at the top of which was a large open ink-bottle, that, falling on its side, spouted its whole contents upon his unlucky head. It turned poor Allan into a blackamoor on the instant, and the figure he cut was so irresistibly ludicrous, that it even changed the fury of the schoolmaster into an uncontrollable fit of laughter. Poor Allan, however, was not much bettered by it, for, though the flagellation was escaped, he was condemned to stand two hours on the form, with his unwashed Ethiopian face and soiled garments. From this unfortunate business he got the nickname of Othello, which was never uttered in his hearing

without rousing him into a state of exasperation as violent as the emotions into which Iago worked the husband of Desdemona. I thought a reference to it now would rather amuse than offend him, and ventured to tell him that I would " drink a measure to the health of the black Othello." I was astounded at the effect it had upon him. He rose—said nothing—gave me a look of fiery indignation, and, before I could utter a word of remonstrance or apology, darted from the house. I lament to say, that I have never seen him since.

No. XVI.

BERKELEY—MONTAIGNE—D'ISRAELI—IRVING—DRYDEN—POPE, &c.

H.—I saw poor ——— yesterday,—he was very weak and infirm. Old age has fallen heavily upon him. And yet it seems but a short while ago, since you and he and I made a cheerful trio, devouring shoals of *white bait* at Greenwich. The unexpected meeting of an old friend, upon whose features Time has written some of his sternest truths, makes one too conscious of one's own mortality, and excites a melancholy feeling of the brevity of life. Swift says that no wise man ever wished to be younger. I do not agree with him.

L.—How like a passing dream the whole world appears to a thoughtful spirit! The mind is like a magic lantern, and gives its own light to a quick succession of phantasmagoric figures. All that we behold we create for ourselves. Berkeley's theory is not the eccentric frolic of an ingenious metaphysician, but a truly philosophical speculation.

H.—Are you serious in saying so?

L.—Perfectly.

> ——————— We are such stuff
> As dreams are made of, and our little life
> Is rounded with a sleep.

H.—I grant that the theory of the immateriality of the world is not to be overthrown by argument, and that Dr. Johnson's attempt to refute it by stamping upon a stone, was a proof that he did not understand the subject; but there are many first truths which must be taken for granted, and which it would be absurd to reject because they admit not of formal demonstration.

L.—The Doctor, I suppose, thought he was imitating Diogenes, who, when called upon for a definition of motion, got up and walked.

H.—Berkeley's theory is not exclusively the property of any single philosopher, but is almost as old as the world itself. It has been familiar to the Brahmins of Hindostan for many thousand years.

L.—That only proves that it is founded on truth. It is the natural offspring of the thoughtful mind, in all climes and under all conditions. Berkeley's theory makes life a sort of dream, and that *life is a dream*, is a proverbial truism in every circle of society. If life were in some respects less dream-like than it is, it would be less endurable. It is trite to remark upon the pleasures of hope and the satiety of possession. That which seems literal is tasteless. We live but in the past or in the future—that is to say in Cloud-land.

'Tis distance lends enchantment to the view.

The past charms us because it is sleeping tranquilly in the moonlight of memory, and the future delights us because it laughs in the golden sunshine of Hope.

H.—Instead of indulging in fantastic visions and fruitless speculations, it would be better for us if every object that recalled our mortality to mind, were regarded as a broad hint to us to take time by the forelock and to set our house in order.

L.—The turn of our present discourse reminds me that I have just been dipping into Montaigne's Essay on Death. It is a very striking production. Almost every sentence teems with thought, and is provocative of meditation.

H.—Montaigne, with all his faults, is an inexpressibly delightful writer.

L.—As to his egotism, I confess that I like him all the better for it. Had he been less bravely egotistical, he would have been less sincere and infinitely less entertaining. Egotism is offensive only when it is associated with a dense stupidity or a freezing pride. The egotism of the lively-minded and the warm-hearted is always agreeable—except to the envious and malignant. Egotism gives a peculiar interest even to such frivolous and gossiping productions as Colly Cibber's *Apology*, and those passages in great writers which exhibit their personal feelings, are always amongst the readers' favorites. Milton and Pope and Cowper enchant us with their egotism, and who does not lament that Shakspeare has obliged the world with so few revelations of his own individual nature?

H.—There are hints and glimpses of Shakspeare's personal feelings and circumstances in his sonnets.

L.—It is a pity that men of genius are generally so reserved, for there is a prejudice against them amongst the vulgar, which would soon pass away if all great men were as open and companionable as Sir Walter Scott.

H.—The world in general do not understand what genius is;—it is confounded with abstruse learning or mere cleverness. Some people stare if you tell them that Shakspeare and Burns, of whose intellectual greatness they have only a vague general notion, were, in the ordinary sense of the words, ignorant or ill-educated men. Coarse shrewdness, or a mere knowledge of languages, or superficial accomplishments, they can appreciate at once—but they cannot recognize the claims of original genius. It is difficult to persuade the mob that a good linguist may be a stupid fellow, or that a man who knows no language but his own may be a great genius,

> Yet he that is but able to express
> No sense at all in several languages,
> Will pass for learneder than he that's known
> To speak the strongest reason in his own.

The showy acquirements of a smart man of the world are often preposterously elevated above the rarest gifts of intellect. Even

men of great learning are sometimes miserably incapable of appreciating original power, or recognizing its true signs. Dr. Parr once fell upon his knees and kissed with reverence the stupid forgeries of Ireland, who pretended to have discovered some new plays of Shakspeare. Bentley with his "slashing hook" *improved* Milton. It requires no ordinary penetration to do full justice to the mental superiority of men with whom we are brought into close contact; familiarity is apt to breed contempt—at least in vulgar minds. I once asked a gentleman what he thought of Hazlitt, to whom I had lately introduced him;—"Oh! he's an odd fellow!" was the reply.

L.—With what a fine genial feeling the elder D'Israeli has collected his anecdotes illustrative of the literary character! Did you know him personally?

H.—No.—I have never met him; but I always feel as if I had received from him the highest personal kindness. His *Essay on the Literary Character* was the first book that I read with interest, and I trace my love of literature to the impulse given to my mind in youth by that generous and ingenious work. Byron seems to have greatly enjoyed this writer's most elegant and instructive literary gossip—if gossip it must be called, though it deserves a more respectful name.

L.—Byron speaks of him very oddly as "that most entertaining and *researching* writer."

H.—I understand that his conversation overflows with anecdote, and that he can hardly write a brief letter to a friend without pouring forth specimens of his rich literary stores. Our friend R. quite a stranger to him, sent him, amongst other literati, a copy of his *Literary Leaves*. His acknowledgement of its receipt is close at hand. I will show it to you. * * * * * Here it is. The allusion to Steevens is excellent.

Bradenham House, Bucks, 4th February, 1839.

True—too true—my dear Sir, I received a year passed, your very acceptable '*Literary Leaves*,' and more than once have they been turned over with no ordinary gratification. The topics were congenial to my taste, and treated with that correct judgment which secures for them a permanent

value; nor was I less interested in those deep and tender emotions which prompted your very elegant verse—the faithful domestic picture of your heart,

I am very rarely in London,—but I remember calling on Mr. John Richardson to acknowledge the receipt of your volume, and, as he was in communication with you, to send, through him, the letter I intended to write. I can't now tell you what occurred, but I more than once remembered to do what has not been done. Procrastination, we have been told, is 'the thief of time'—but it is something worse: for it not only defrauds us of our good intentions, but smothers our affections; for I can truly assure you, your volume awoke a sympathy in me which I have often wished to express. But writing and even reading have become a painful effort, since my sight has nearly abandoned me—as I think you must perceive in my irregular scribble.

The mystery—if mystery it be—enveloping 'the Sonnets of Shakspeare' —seems to have grown darker, by the novel elucidations which have latterly variously appeared. Some are positive that they have ascertained the singular person to whom they are addressed; and a Mr. J. A. Brown, has arranged them as 'Shakspeare's Autobiographical Poems'—a small volume which I have not yet seen, but which several reviewers speak favorably of. These 'Sonnets' have had a singular fate since Steevens declared that nothing short of an act of Parliament was necessary to compel us to read them, and he, boldly as impudently, rejected them from the works of Shakspeare. As Steevens was not deficient in critical judgment, and was a malicious wag, whenever he had his friend and rival Malone in view, this false and ridiculous decision may have been only one of the many unfair tricks or traps which he laid to catch his brother commentator. Boswell told me of several which had only originated in this mischievous Puck, who, when he had beguiled some innocent into the mire, always screamed in laughter.

I hope this letter, which I send to London, may reach you by the mail you desire—but of this I must remain uncertain.

At all events, believe me to remain,

Dear Sir,

Very truly yours,

J. D'ISRAELI.

I know my son received your volume, and was equally gratified with it as myself. He has little or no leisure for any literary correspondence since he has entered into public life, and necessarily into miscellaneous correspondence with his constituents.

Capt. D. L. Richardson.

L.—D'Israeli the Younger is a man of real genius. But it

would be as well for him if he were less sharp and flippant in his senatorial eloquence. Have you read any of his novels?

H.—Some of his speeches are admirable. I have read none of his later Novels. I read his *Contarini Fleming* when it first appeared.

L.—I have heard it highly spoken of. Let us have your critical opinion upon it.

H.—It is unquestionably the work of a writer of noble powers, and yet it would be difficult, I think, for a man of any taste to read it through, without occasional exclamations against its extravagance, its abruptness, and its mysticism. As a mere tale it is a failure; for the incidents are not only highly improbable but very unskilfully connected. The author has mixed up many of the real events of his own life with the most fantastical idealities. He has violently jumbled truth and romance together, and the result is like a sick man's dream. As far as the public generally are concerned, this psychological-autobiographical-romantic extravaganza must be a perplexing mystery. Even the author's own familiar friends must be sometimes a little puzzled in endeavouring to distinguish the actual events of his life, from the cloudy creations with which they are associated.

L.—If this be a fair character of the book, the world will willingly let it die.

H.—The author's great merit consists in the freedom and eloquence of his style, his powerful painting of the strongest passions, and the felicity of his descriptions of external nature, which, though rarely elaborate, are often wonderfully vivid. But the flare of the diction—the feverish and morbid intensity of the sentiments—unrelieved by the sober tone of reality, or the incidents and feelings of ordinary life, must, at last, weary the most patient reader and blind him with excess of light.

L.—I wonder what would have been said of a work of this kind in the days of Addison and Steele, or of Johnson and Goldsmith.

H.—It would assuredly have shocked the cautious propriety and classical taste of Addison. Its style would have presented a strange contrast to his own Virgilian prose. Johnson would

have pronounced the author an inspired madman. It would have been difficult for the readers of his time to peruse it with patience after the *Vicar of Wakefield*—a work even yet unrivalled as a picture of English life. What exquisite discrimination of character, what truth and delicacy of touch, what quiet but most effective humour, what grace of manner, what easy and unaffected power are exhibited in that small but matchless performance! I wonder Wilkie, a truly congenial spirit, never thought of transfering some of Goldsmith's sweetest pen-pictures to the canvass. Mulready, one of the most able of Wilkie's imitators, has ventured upon the task, and not without some degree of success.

L.—We must not compare the glaring and strained and distorted literary creations of the present day with any of the perfect models of the past. Perhaps a sagacious observer in the time of Addison might as easily have anticipated the subsequent revolution in our literature, as Lord Chesterfield foretold the political revolution in France. Chastity of style soon ceased to be an object of literary ambition. Succeeding authors contemplated with despair the purity and grace of the Raffaelle of Essayists, and aimed at a very different sort of merit.

H.—You will observe the same convulsive effort to produce strong and startling effects in the poetry of the present day as in its prose.

L.—This is partly true; but still I am not a great admirer of which is vaguely called correctness in poetry; and I am not sorry that we have Coleridge and Shelley and Byron in the room of Addison, and Pope and Johnson.

H.—I was dipping the other day into Washington Irving's *Sketch Book*, (a work written with something of Addison's grace and Goldsmith's tenderness—a rare merit in these days of *strong* writing) and was struck with the similarity of a passage in his beautiful little narrative, entitled *The Broken Heart*, with a well-known and justly-admired stanza in *Don Juan*. I will give them both to you.

> Man's love is of man's life a thing apart,
> 'Tis woman's whole existence, man may range

> The court, camp, church, the vessel and the mart,
> Sword, gown, gain, glory, offer in exchange
> Pride, fame, ambition, to fill up the heart,
> And few there are whom these cannot estrange:
> Men have all these resources, we but one,
> To love again, and be again undone.—*Byron.*

Man is the creature of interest and ambition. His nature leads him forth into the struggle and bustle of the world. Love is but the embellishment of his early life, or a song piped in the intervals of the acts. He seeks for fame, for fortune, for space in the world's thought, and dominion over his fellow men. But a woman's whole life is the history of the affections. The heart is her world; it is there her ambition strives for empire; it is there her avarice seeks for forbidden treasures. She sends forth her whole soul in the traffic of affection; and if shipwrecked, her case is hopeless—for it is a bankruptcy of the heart.—*Washington Irving,*

Now which of these two writers is indebted to the other? The Canto of *Don Juan*, containing the stanza I have just read to you, was published in the latter end of the year 1819. Irving's preface to his Sketch Book is dated February 1820. This would seem to make *him* the pilferer or imitator; but the *Sketch Book* was merely a collection and reprint of papers previously published in American periodicals, and they might have made their first appearance before Byron's *Don Juan.*

L.—If there was any plagiarism, I am inclined to think it was Irving's, for it is very unlikely that Lord Byron was much acquainted with American Literature, and the young prose writer was then little known, perhaps even in his own country. Irving was, most probably, an admirer of the poetical genius of Byron, (then in its heigth of fame,) and was influenced, unconsciously it may be, by his true and exquisite description of the condition of the female heart.

H.—A charge of plagiarism from Schlegel's Lectures of Shakspeare has been brought against Coleridge. The coincidences of thought on the same subjects in the two writers—if they are really mere coincidences, are curious indeed. The general impression in both England and Germany is against the English Lecturer, and yet he seems to maintain, that, if there is plagia-

rism on either side, the sin is Schlegel's, whose lectures were not orally delivered until two years after those of Coleridge, who appealed to Sir George Beaumont and the Bishop of Durham, and Mr. Sotheby and Mr. Rogers and Lord Byron, to say whether he had borrowed a single principle of his criticisms on Shakspeare from the German writer. "It was fortunate for my moral reputation," says Coleridge, "that I had not only from five to seven hundred ear witnesses, that passages had been given by me at the Royal Institution two years before Schlegel commenced his Lectures at Vienna, but that notes had been taken of those by several men and ladies of high rank."

There are passages in the remarks of the two Lecturers on Shakspeare's *Romeo and Juliet,* that are not merely similar but almost identical. Take a specimen:—

SCHLEGEL.

Whatever is most intoxicating in the odour of a southern spring, languishing in the song of the nightingale, or voluptuous on the first opening of the rose, is breathed into this poem, *(Romeo and Juliet,)*........And all these contrasts are so blended in the harmonious and wonderful work into a unity of expression, that the echo which the whole leaves behind in the mind resembles a single but endless sigh.

COLERIDGE.

With Juliet, love has all that is tender and melancholy in the nightingale, all that is voluptuous in the rose, with whatever is sweet in the freshness of spring; but it ends with a long deep sigh, like the breeze of the evening.

De Quinscey (the Opium Eater) has broadly charged Coleridge with gross plagiarism from Schelling and Klopstock, but I do not know whether he has alluded to Schlegel's Lectures. If Coleridge was guilty of plagiarism, it was certainly not from poverty of genius, but sheer indolence. In a letter dated February 1818, to a gentleman who had attended his course of Lectures given in that year, Coleridge states that he had delivered Lectures on Shakspeare 17 years before, (that is in 1801,) and that Schlegel's were delivered two years afterwards; but, according to the German Lecturer's own statement, they were delivered in 1808, and he acknowledges, in his edition of the Lectures printed in 1811, that the part respecting Shakspeare and the English Drama had been

almost wholly re-written. Drake, in his *Memorials of Shakspeare*, remarks, that Coleridge's description of *Romeo and Juliet* "is evidently founded on what Schlegel has so beautifully said on the same subject." But if Coleridge's statement is to be believed, it is more likely that Schlegel was indebted to Coleridge than Coleridge to Schlegel.

L.—Yes—but I recollect that Schlegel tells his audience, that he had written an Essay on *Romeo and Juliet*, "*a number of years ago*." It was inserted, he says, in the first volume of *Characteristicken und Kriticken*, published by his brother and himself. Is it not possible that Coleridge had seen that work? Is it not possible too that Schlegel repeated passages of that work in his Lectures?

H.— I fear it would be difficult to settle the question. Coleridge was in Germany at the end of the year 1798. By the way, it will be as well—and only fair indeed to Coleridge—to turn to a memorandum of his own upon the subject of his remarks on Hamlet—

Hamlet was the play, or, rather, Hamlet himself was the character in the intention and exposition of which I first made my turn for philosophical criticism, and especially for insight into the genius of Shakspeare noticed. This happened first amongst my acquaintances, as Sir George Beaumont will bear witness; and subsequently, long before Schlegel had delivered at Vienna the Lectures on Shakspeare, which he afterwards published, I had given, on the same subject, eighteen Lectures, substantially the same, proceeding from the very same point of view, and deducing the same conclusions, so far as I either then agreed or now agree with him, I gave three Lectures at the Royal Institution, before six or seven hundred auditors, of rank and eminence, in the spring of the same year, in which Sir Humphrey Davy, a fellow-labourer, made his great revolutionary discoveries in chemistry. Even in detail the coincidence of Schlegel with my Lectures was so extraordinary, that all who, at a later period, heard the same words, taken by me from my notes of the Lectures at the Royal Institution, concluded on borrowing, on my part, from Schlegel. Mr. Hazlitt, whose hatred of me is in such an inverse ratio to my zealous kindness towards him, as to be defended by his warmest admirer, Charles Lamb—(who, God bless him! besides his characteristic obstinacy of adherence to old friends, as long a least as they are at all down in the world, is linked as by a charm to Hazlitt's conversation)—only as 'frantic;'—Mr. Hazlitt, I say, himself re-

plied to an assertion of my plagiarism from Schlegel in these words:—"That is a lie; for I myself heard the very same character of Hamlet from Coleridge, before he went to Germany, and when he had neither read nor could read a page of German?" Now Hazlitt was on a visit to me, at my cottage at Nether Stowey, Stowey Somerset, in the summer of 1798, in the September of which year I first was out of sight of the shores of Great Britain. Recorded by me, S. Coleridge, 7th January, 1819.

L.—The *possibilities* of plagiarism are nearly equal on both sides, as far as we are, at present, able to decide. If we knew exactly in what year Schlegel *wrote* out his Lectures—if we had by us a copy of his separate Essay on *Romeo and Juliet*, published long before the Lectures, to compare with what he says subsequently on the same subject in his Lectures, and had also his *first* edition of the Lectures, that we might see how far it was modified in the edition of 1811, we might perhaps discover the means of bringing the question to a positive decision. At present, I think, we must be content to leave the matter as we find it. In this instance one of the parties *must* be a plagiarist. It can hardly be a case of unconscious plagiarism.

None however but an experienced author can readily believe how many cases are continually occurring of quite unconscious plagiarism. A writer is often startled and mortified to find in the course of a re-perusal of some favorite author, that he has been indebted to him for a thought, which he had imagined was the original production of his own brain.

H.—That is very true, and should make critics cautious that they speak not too harshly of every thing that wears the aspect of a plagiarism. And, indeed, how often it happens that men of a similar turn of mind, without the least communication with each other, hit upon a similarity of thought and even of expression! "Great wits jump." However, there must be some limit to a critic's charity. I do not think Gray, for instance, is to be excused for his curious mosaic work of images from so many different sources, however ingeniously put together. He has scarcely a single thought of his own. He certainly was the most laborious artist that ever lived. His poems are indeed *works;* they are *made.*

L.—And yet the *amiable* and *pious* Beattie, in his attack upon the memory of Churchill, when his ashes were scarcely cold, has spoken of "*Gray's unlabored art.*"—Good heavens! how many wretched critics upon poetry have we had amongst the poets themselves! According to Beattie, Churchill was "*drivelling and dull.*

By *nature uninspired, untaught by art.*"

Oh, that Churchill had been alive to answer this ungenerous insult! He would have given the forcible-feeble Beattie a character that would have thrown even the sketch of Fitzpatrick into the shade.

H.—The line you just repeated was borrowed from the Duke of Buckinghamshire's *Essay on Poetry* :—

What things are these, that would be poets thought
By nature uninspired nor learning taught?

As Gray's affectionate first Editor, Mason, and his later Editor, Matthias, have traced his beauties to their original sources (save us from our friends!) the world is left in no uncertainty as to the extent of that poet's plunderings; but I think, notwithstanding the industry of Warton, and Roscoe, and Bowles (and the last cannot be accused of editorial partiality), the sins of Pope in this way are comparatively little known. He has pilfered freely from the meanest of his tribe, and, perhaps, his master, Dryden, is the only great writer to whom he is much indebted. You may sometimes trace an image or expression back to Milton—but very rarely, and I do not think he has once borrowed from Shakspeare, though he edited his plays, and marked what he considered the best passages by inverted commas. But he had no great opinion of the first poet of the world, and his edition of him was the worst ever published. It was driven out of the field even by poor Theobald's. Pope used to remark that Shakspeare's style was the style of a bad age. Perhaps Dryden was the only poet whose writings he thoroughly enjoyed. But who does not enjoy Dryden?—Ah! glorious old John—does he not handle the old heroic couplet better than any of his

predecessors or successors? What are the merits of Waller and Pope as versifiers compared to the free, easy, sonorous, varied, elastic harmony of Dryden? As to the affected discords and slipshod measures of some of our yet living writers, and the heavy, abrupt, and sometimes lumbering lines of Byron, or the sluggish feeble verse of Wordsworth, it is a perfect farce to speak of them as improvements upon Dryden's ten-syllable couplet measure. Still worse, perhaps, is Pope's mechanical exactness and unvaried rhythm. Here is a specimen of Dryden's heroic verse, which I defy any critic to match for judicious and expressive variety of pause, and the general harmony of its construction, in the whole range of English poetry, from Chaucer to Tom Moore—

Whilst listening to the murmuring leaves he stood,
More than a mile immersed within the wood,
At once the wind was laid; the whispering sound
Was dumb; a rising earth-quake rocked the ground;
With deeper brown the grove was overspread;
A sudden horror seized his giddy head,
And his ears tingled and his color fled.
Nature was in alarm; some danger nigh
Seem threatened, though unseen to mortal eye.
Unused to fear, he summoned all his soul,
And stood collected in himself and whole;
Not long: for soon a whirlwind rose around,
And from afar he heard a screaming sound,
As of a dame distressed, who cried for aid,
And filled with loud laments the secret shade.

How exquisitely the cæsural pause floats from one wave to another in this flood of music!

Here is another specimen of lighter and brisker harmony:—

A milk-white hind, immortal and unchanged,
Fed on the lawns or in the forest ranged;
Without unspotted, innocent within,
She feared no danger, for she knew no sin;
Yet had she oft been chased with horns and hounds
And Scythian shafts; and many-winged wounds

Aimed at her heart; was often forced to fly,
And doomed to death, though fated not to die.

These are truly noble couplets. How "the lines vibrate like polished lances!"

L.—I quite agree with you. Pope has never equalled his master in the art of versification; but then, he has surpassed him in delicacy of satire, in the elegant turn of his compliments, in tenderness of sentiment, and in richness of fancy.

H.—Yes—in these respects Pope goes beyond his master, for Dryden never drew a tear, and he has not much fancy. But he had a far more vigorous understanding, a better ear, and a greater command of the mechanism of his art. He expressed himself with such freedom in verse, that he seemed to find it almost as easy to connect rhyme with reason—to argue a grave question in metre—as to support an unfettered private conversation in familiar prose. Dryden is now not popularly read, but poetical students always feel themselves refreshed by a perusal of his manly, free, and thoroughly English verses. And his prose too—why it is the best in the language—a perfect model for the student in English composition—so idiomatical and unaffected, so clear, so fluent, and spirited, and varied, and sometimes also so strikingly *picturesque*. Did you ever read this passage?—none but a poet could have written it.

It was on that memorable day in the first summer of the late war, when our navy engaged the French; a day wherein the two most mighty and best appointed fleets which any age had ever seen, disputed the command *of the greater half of the globe, the commerce of nations, and the riches of the universe*. While these vast floating bodies on either side, moved against each other in parallel lines, and our countrymen, under the happy conduct of his Royal Highness, went breaking, by little and little, into the line of the enemy; *the noise of the cannon from both navies reached our ears about the city*: so that all men, being alarmed with it, *and in dreadful suspence of the event, which they knew was then deciding, every one went following the sound as his fancy led him*: and leaving the town almost empty, some took towards the park, some cross the river, others down it; *all seeking the noise in the depth of silence*. Amongst the rest, it was the fortune of Eugenius, Crites, Lisedeius, and Neander, to be in company together:

three of those persons whom their wit and quality have made known to all the town; and whom I chose to hide under these borrowed names, that they may not suffer by so ill a relation as I am going to make of their discourse.

Taking then a barge, which a servant of Lisedeius had provided for them, they made haste to shoot the bridge, *and left behind* them that great fall of waters which hindered *them from hearing what they desired:* after which, having disengaged themselves from many vessels which rode at anchor in the Thames, and almost blocked up the passage towards Greenwich, they ordered the watermen *to let fall their oars more gently; and then, every one favoring his own curiosity with a strict silence,* it was not long ere *they perceived the air to break about them like the noise of distant thunder,* or of swallows in a chimney: *those little undulations of sound, though almost vanishing before they reach them,* yet still seeming to retain somewhat of their first horror which they had betwixt the fleets. After they had attentively listened till such time *as by little and little the sound went from them;* Eugenius, lifting up his hand, and taking notice of it, was the first who congratulated to the rest that happy omen of our nation's victory: adding, that we had but this to desire in confirmation of it, that we might hear no more of *that noise which was now leaving the English coast.—Dryden's Essay on Dramatic Poesy.*

L.—Yes, this is thoroughly good English composition, and to speak candidly, it shows more imagination than I gave Dryden credit for.

H.—Dryden is too much neglected in these times. The English have reason to be proud of him.

L.—Pope was a great writer too, but he sadly plundered his master. What barefaced plagiarisms—what servile echoes are these!

Happy who in his verse can justly steer,
From grave to gay from lively to severe.

Dryden.

——————————— Happily to steer,
From grave to gay from lively to severe.

Pope.

For truth had such a face and such a mien
As to be loved needs only to be seen.

Dryden.

Vice is a monster of such frightful mien,
As to be hated needs but to be seen.

Pope.

'Tis being devout at play, wise at a ball
Or bringing wit and friendship to Whitehall.

Dryden.

Mad at a fox-chase, wise at a debate
Drunk at a borough, civil at a ball,
Friendly at Hackney, faithless at Whitehall.

Pope.

For who can rail so long as he can sleep ?

Dryden.

For who can rail so long as they can write ?

Pope.

And Heaven had wanted one immortal song.

Dryden.

The world had wanted many an idle song.

Pope.

To heave the stone against the rising mount,
Which, urged and labored and forced up with pain,
Recoils, and rolls impetuous down, and smokes along the plain.

Dryden.

With many a weary step, and many a groan ;
Up the high hill he heaves a huge round stone,
The huge round stone resulting with a bound
Thunders, impetuous down, and smokes along the ground.

Pope.

And round him the pleased audience clapped their wings.

Dryden.

And all the aerial audience clap their wings.

Pope.

So the false spider, when her nets are spread
Deep ambushed in her silent den does lie,
And feels far off the trembling of her thread.
Whose filmy cord should bind the struggling fly.

Dryden.

The spider's touch, so exquisitely fine,
Feels at each thread and lives along the line.

Pope.

So stands the Thracian herdsman with his spear
Full in the gap, and *hopes the hunted bear.*

Dryden.

The patient fisher takes his silent stand,
Intent, his angle trembling in his hand,

With looks unmoved, *he hopes the scaly breed*,
And eyes the dancing cork and bending reed.

Pope.

L.—Those last four lines are highly picturesque and pleasing.

H.—They are so—but let me go on.

Dissembling sleep, and watchful to betray
With inward rage he meditates his prey.

Dryden.

Resolved to win, he meditates the way
By force to ravish, or by fraud betray.

Pope.

They neither are, nor were, nor e'er can be.

Dryden.

Whoever thinks a faultless piece to see
Thinks what ne'er was, nor is, nor e'er shall be.

Pope.

Who dies to-day, and will as long be so
As he who died a thousand years ago.

Dryden.

And when I die be sure you let me know.
Great Homer died a thousand years ago.

Pope.

And where imprisoned in so sweet a cage
A soul might well be pleased to pass an age.

Dryden.

Most souls 'tis true but peep out once an age.
Dull sullen prisoners in the body's cage.

Pope.

But far more numerous was the herd of such,
Who think too little or who talk too much.

Dryden.

Alike in ignorance, his reason such
Whether he thinks too little or too much.

Pope.

Avoid extremes, and shun the fault of such,
Who still are pleased too little or too much.

Pope.

Short is the date of all immoderate fame.

Dryden.

Short is the date, alas ! of modern rhymes.

Pope.

Let honor and preferment go for gold,
But glorious beauty isn't to be sold.

Dryden.

Judges and Senates have been bought for gold,
Esteem and love are never to be sold.

Pope

Never debase yourself by treacherous ways,
Nor by such abject methods seek for praise.

Dryden.

To what base arts, and by what abject ways,
Are mortals urged through sacred lust of praise.

Pope.

Let mighty Spenser raise his reverend head,
Cowley and Denham start up from the dead.

Dryden.

Nay, should great Homer rear his reverend head
Zoilus himself would start up from the dead.

Pope.

I could easily increase the number of these specimens of Pope's pilferings after a very slight search, but these as you see I can either call to my remembrance, or turn to at once.

L.—Dr. Joseph Warton instances no less than seven different lines in the single poem of *Eloisa to Abelard* as thefts from various parts of Dryden's works.

O name for ever sad, for ever dear—
Now warm in love now withering in my bloom—
Curse on all laws but those which love has made—
And paradise was opened in the wild—
Thy eyes diffused a reconciling ray—
And love the offender, yet detest the offence—
I come, I come, prepare your roseate bowers

Warton does not refer us to the corresponding passages in Dryden, but I think I recollect them with tolerable exactness.

O *day* for ever sad, for ever clear—
Now warm in love now withering in *the grave*—
And own no laws but those which love *ordains*—
And paradise was opened in *his face*—
His eyes diffused *a venerable grace*—
She hugged the offender *and forgave* the offence—
I come without delay,—I come—

W

One or two of your own quotations, H—, are from the *Art of Poetry*, translated by Dryden from Boileau, and several, if I am not mistaken, are from the *Essay on Satire*, by John Sheffield, Duke of Buckinghamshire. The noble poet laid claim to the latter production, though it is now usually printed amongst the works of Dryden. The translation from Boileau was partly Sir William Soame's.

H.—The general impression on the first appearance of the *Essay on Satire*, I believe, was that it was originally written by the Duke of Buckinghamshire, but that it was much altered and improved by Dryden, whose strong hand may sometimes, I think, be pretty distinctly recognized. Hallam, however, asserts that Dryden had nothing to do with it, a conclusion at which he arrives from the character of the poem. Dryden was waylaid and beaten for some allusions in the *Essay* to the Earl of Rochester and the Duchess of Portsmouth.

L.—The Duke of Buckinghamshire was said to have been very proud of the poem, and perhaps you remember his couplet in his *Essay on Poetry*, in which he says of Dryden,

> Though praised and beaten for another's rhymes,
> His own deserve as great applause sometimes.

H.—The whole of that last line is rich—but the qualifying expression of *sometimes* is particularly comical! Dryden while praising Sheffield so extravagantly, in the dedication of the Æneis takes care very slyly to relieve himself from all claim to the *Essay on Poetry*. "Your Essay on Poetry, which was published without a name, *and of which I was not honored with the confidence*, I read over and over with much delight and as much instruction." Dryden is not only to be traced in the *Essay on Satire*, from which I have taken only two specimens, but is seen to strike out some sparkles of his own in the translation from Boileau, which he also corrected and altered with great freedom. I have made but three quotations from it. On the shelf behind you is a copy of Sheffield. I should like to see the context of the couplet quoted.

L.—This is odd enough. The couplet is referred to by Johnson in his life of Dryden, as from the *Art of Poetry* by Sheffield. Sheffield's poem is entitled *An Essay on Poetry;* I cannot find the couplet.

H.—Perhaps Sheffield was laughed at for his presumption, and was induced to drop the lines out of the later editions of the poem.

L.—I see that he has at all events kept a couplet, with the same concluding words.

> 'Tis not a flash of fancy, which *sometimes*,
> Dazzling our minds, sets off the slightest *rhymes*.

Pope had a passage of Sheffield's in his mind when he wrote his well-known couplet—

> Whoever thinks a faultless piece to see
> Thinks what ne'er was, nor is, nor e'er shall be.

Here are Sheffield's lines—

> Reject that vulgar error (which appears
> So fair) of making perfect characters;
> There's no such thing in nature, and you'll draw
> A faultless monster which the world ne'er saw.

H.—Dr. Johnson traces the *faultless monster* to Scaliger. But, to return to Pope; he even plunders the prose of Dryden, and turns it into verse.

He is a leveller in poetry; he *creeps* along with *ten little words in every line*, and helps out his numbers with *for*, *to*, and *unto*, and all the pretty *expletives* he can find.—*Dryden*.

> While expletives their feeble aid do join
> And ten low words oft creep in one dull line.—*Pope*.

Good sense and good nature are never separated.—*Dryden*.

> Good nature and good sense must ever join.—*Pope*.

L.—In spite of the objections which have been made to monosyllabic lines, it would be easy to show that it is wrong to reject them altogether. Pope himself has some spirited lines made up of single and independent syllables.

Ah come not, write not, think not once of me!—
No, fly me, fly me, far as pole from pole!

And what force and what expansive meaning has that line in Milton—

Rocks, caves, lakes, dens, bogs, fens, and shades of death.

Wordsworth in a letter to Scott, says—"I admire Dryden's talents and genius highly—but his is not a poetical genius." Can any one read even the prose passage, which we read just now, and doubt that Dryden was a true poet? Look at his Fables from Chaucer and Boccaccio, written in his extremeold age, too, and "with the bayonet of necessity at his back." He is said to have done injustice to Chaucer on the whole, but several of his lines are unquestionably improvements on the original. I cannot resist the pleasure of reading a passage from his Preface to the Fables, in which he alludes so pleasantly and gracefully to his old age. Opie, the painter, used to say that it was a mistake to suppose that people went on improving to the last, in any art or profession; according to him, they put their best thoughts into their first works, and what they gain afterwards in correctness and refinement, they lose in originality and vigor. Dryden presents an instance to the contrary.—

Chaucer (as you have formerly been told by our learned Mr. Rymer) first adorned and amplified our barren tongue from the Provencal, which was then the most polished of all the modern languages; but this subject has been copiously treated by that great critic, who deserves no little commendation from us, his countrymen. For these reasons of time, and resemblance of genius in Chaucer and Boccaccio, I resolved to join them in my present work; to which I have added some original papers of my own; which, whether they are equal or inferior to my other poems, an author is the most improper judge; and, therefore, I leave them wholly to the mercy of the reader. I will hope the best, that they will not be condemned; but if they should, I have the excuse of an old gentleman, who mounting on horseback before some ladies, when I was present, got up somewhat heavily, but desired of the fair spectators, that they would count fourscore and eight before they judged him. By the mercy of God, I am already come within twenty years of his number, a cripple in my limbs; but what decays are in my mind, the reader must determine. I think myself as vigorous

as ever in the faculties of my soul, excepting only my memory, which is not impaired to any great degree; and if I lose not more of it, I have no great reason to complain. What judgment I had, increases rather than diminishes; and thoughts, such as they are, come crowding in so fast upon me, that my only difficulty is to choose or to reject; to run them into verse, or to give them the other harmony of prose. I have so long studied and practised both, that they are grown into a habit, and become familiar to me. In short, though I may lawfully claim some part of the old gentleman's excuse, yet I wish to preserve it till I think I have greater need, and ask no grains of allowance for the faults of this my present work, but those which are given of course to human frailty.

Let us now look at a specimen or two of the poetical fruits of Dryden's green old age. Here is a passage from *Palamon and Arcite.* The words *flowery green* in the fourth line are vague, and not therefore so good as the original—

Than is the lily on his stalkie green.

But here is a beautiful little picture, not in Chaucer; it is Dryden's own—

At every turn, she made a little stand.
And thrust among the thorns her lily hand,
To draw the rose.

In reading Hunt's *Rimini,* I have often been reminded of Dryden's Fables from Chaucer. He has evidently studied Dryden's manner, and appreciated his varied versification. In imitating its ease and freedom, he has occasionally gone a step too far, and fallen into unpleasant roughnesses. But I am keeping you from my specimen of Dryden—

Thus year by year they pass, and day by day,
Till once, 'twas on the morn of cheerful May,
The young Emilia, fairer to be seen
Than the fair lily on the flowery green;
More fresh than May herself in blossoms new,
For with the rosy colour strove her hue,
Wak'd, as her custom was, before the day,
To do observance due to sprightly May;
For sprightly May commands our youth to keep
The vigils of her night, and breaks their sluggard sleep;

Each gentle breast with kindly warmth she moves;
Inspires new flames, revives extinguished loves.
In this remembrance Emily, ere day,
Arose and dressed herself in rich array;
Fresh as the month, and as the morning fair,
Adown her shoulders fell her length of hair:
A ribband did the braided tresses bind,
The rest was loose, and wanton'd in the wind:
Aurora had but newly chas'd the night,
And purpled o'er the sky with blushing light,
When to the garden walk she took her way,
To sport and trip along in cool of day,
And offer maiden vows in honour of the May.
At every turn, *she made a little stand,*
And thrust among the thorns her lily hand
To draw the rose; and every rose she drew,
She shook the stalk, and brushed away the dew:
Then party-colour'd flowers of white and red
She wove, to make a garland for her head:
This done, she sung and carol'd out so clear,
That men and angels might rejoice to hear:
Ev'n wondering Philomel forgot to sing,
And learn'd from her to welcome in the Spring.
The tower, of which before was mention made,
Within whose keep the captive knights were laid,
Built of a large extent, and strong withal,
Was one partition of the palace wall:
The garden was enclos'd within the square,
Where young Emilia took her morning air.

Here is another specimen of Dryden's most forcible manner—the last and best couplet is not in Chaucer.

When Arcite was to Thebes return'd again,
The loss of her he lov'd renew'd his pain;
What could be worse, than never more to see
His life, his soul, his charming Emily?
He rav'd with all the madness of despair,
He roar'd, he beat his breast, he tore his hair.
Dry sorrow in his stupid eyes appears,
For, wanting nourishment, he wanted tears:
His eye-balls in their hollow sockets sink:
Bereft of sleep, he loaths his meat and drink:

He withers at his heart, and looks as wan
As the pale spectre of a murder'd man :

I can hardly come to a stop. One more passage I *must* give you.

The slayer of himself yet saw I there,
The gore congeal'd was clotted in his hair:
With eyes half clos'd and gaping mouth he lay,
And grim, as when he breath'd his sullen soul away.
In midst of all the dome, Misfortune sate,
And gloomy Discontent, and fell Debate,
And Madness, laughing in his ireful mood;
And arm'd Complaint on Theft; and cries of Blood.

L.—The fourth is a noble line, and every word of it Dryden's; the last line but one is very striking. It is old Chaucer's a little altered. Gray has stolen it—

And moody madness laughing wild,
Amidst severest woe.

Chaucer's words are—

Yet saw I woodnesse laughing in his rage.

H.—Pope in his versions of Chaucer caught something of Dryden's freedom of versification. Perhaps the critics of this day are disposed to underrate Pope. He had a favorite see-saw system of versification, which has led many readers to turn away in disgust from passages that are perfectly admirable, in every thing but in the arrangement of the cæsural pauses—

But anxious cares | the pensive nymph oppress'd,
And secret pass | ions labour'd in her breast.
Not youthful kings | in battle seized alive,
Not scornful vir | gins who their charms survive,
Not ardent lov | ers robb'd of all their bliss,
Not ancient la | dies when refused a kiss
Not tyrants fierce | that unrepenting die,
Not Cynthia | when her mantua's pinned awry,
E'er felt such rage, | resentment, and despair.
As thou, sad vir | gin! for thy ravished hair.

L.—Of this sort of style Pope's own couplet in ridicule of tasteless gardening, may fairly be used as an illustration—

Grove nods at grove, each alley has its brother,
And half the platform just reflects the other.

H.—It is full time to adjourn, or I think we should have done well to turn to a consideration of Pope's better qualities. With all his faults, he is a wonderfully fine writer, and has many passages of surpassing excellence. His *Rape of the Lock* is the most exquisite thing of the kind that was ever written.

No. XVII.

SIR WALTER SCOTT AND LORD BYRON.

H.—Scott and Byron used to display that sort of inverted ambition to be regarded rather as private gentlemen than as men of letters, which so disgusted Voltaire with Congreve. In Byron, much of this was, of course, sheer affectation, but Scott, I think always said what he thought, and no more. He was not like Byron—sophisticated,—but an honest, straightforward, healthy-hearted fellow.

L.—Your praise of Scott requires some qualification. His life by Lockhart has rather lowered him in the estimation of many, while that of Byron, by Moore, has mollified the prejudices of some readers, and greatly raised the admiration of others. When Scott's son-in-law let the world discover that the author of *Waverley* and the *Lay of the Last Minstrel* was a worldly-minded man, covetous of yellow dirt and petty municipal distinctions—when the unhappy trade-partnership—the speculation in types and paper—was exposed in all its details, and it was discovered, by Scott's own letters, how he had wheedled friends and strangers into the employment of his own printing press, under the impression that they were seconding his disinterested regard for the prosperity of other men—when his deliberate falsehoods respecting the authorship of the Scotch Novels, reiterated verbally and in writing for so many years, were carefully collected and record-

ed in print—when it was clearly shown that these falsehoods were not prompted by any pressing necessity or strong temptation, but were resorted to for the gratification of an idle whim—when Lockhart (oh! save us from our friends!) discovered for us these spots in the sun, it was no longer gazed upon with the feeling of idolatry which it formerly excited.

H.—A few silly sentimentalists and puritanical casuists may have been somewhat shocked by these revelations, but I cannot believe that men of sense, or the majority of Lockhart's readers, have thought less respectfully of Scott's character, because he looked to the main chance, for the sake of his family, and mystified his friends and the public respecting a secret which he was fully privileged to preserve. It is clear, that no man had a right to force this secret from him. To deny to an anonymous author the power to give a blinding negative, when pestered by impertinent curiosity, with respect to the paternity of his productions, would be tantamount to declaring that all secrecy in matters literary is unlawful. Speech would then betray, and "silence give consent."

L.—This is a very imperfect sort of morality. If a man might lie for the gratification of a mere whim, it would be easy to justify falsehoods prompted by more serious occasions. The only safe rule is to stick to truth under all circumstances, and not to indulge in exceptions. If morality will give a man an inch, he will take an ell.

H.—I do not wish to appear either paradoxical or immoral, but I cannot help remarking that in morality, as in other sciences, there is no rule without exceptions.

L.—I will mention two. We should always adhere to truth. We should do unto others as we would they should do unto us.

H.—These examples are against you. All nations, civilized and savage, have sanctioned deceit and falsehood under certain circumstances. Who ever objected to stratagems and misrepresentations in war? Do you think any British officer deems himself guilty of a crime, if, when taken prisoner, he gives a false account to the enemy of the strength and position of his own

countrymen? Would any one applaud him if he were to tell the truth, and sacrifice the cause of his country? As in public life, so in private. Suppose a gang of assassins were at your door, about to enter your house, with the avowed intention of murdering your wife and child, and that you knew you could only save their lives by a falsehood—such as the assertion that a company of soldiers or a body of policemen were in the back garden—would you hesitate? Or would you, by expressive silence, on being cross-questioned, or by a revelation of the plain truth, let the assassins understand, that they might set about their bloody work in perfect safety?

L.—You put extreme cases—such as will at all events be of no service to Walter Scott—and, strong as they may seem, they will not overthrow my position. It is not what some men do, or would do, but what is right and what is wrong, that is the question. I agree with you that almost any officer in the condition you speak of would sin against the truth; and I am quite ready to admit that, to save the lives of wife and child from the assassin's knife, I should not myself hesitate a moment to frighten him with a false report. But nevertheless all falsehood is evil, and the question still recurs, whether we may do evil for the sake of good. I think not; and the fact that men do so continually and readily, and without compunction, is no argument whatever against the general principle.

H.—An impracticable rule is no rule. In this life it would be absolutely impossible to carry out a no-exception rule. Besides, it is not the rule but the end for which a rule is made, that is of importance in morality as in criticism—

> If where the rules not far enough extend,
> *(Since rules were made but to promote their end)*
> Some lucky license answers to the full
> The end proposed, that license is a rule.

I grant that if falsehood were general—if it had no check—all confidence would be at an end, society would be reduced to a state of anarchy, and the best men would lose all self-respect and cease to aim at the love and admiration of their fellow-men. There is

no question, therefore, that falsehood should be checked as much as possible. No one doubts that it is an evil in itself. There are, however, many moral as well as physical evils which we hate and avoid on all ordinary occasions, but to which we are compelled to yield in sudden and great emergencies. Human life will not admit of the application of moral rules that have the rigid exactitude of mathematical axioms. Every page of the history of mankind furnishes an illustration of this fact.

L.—No temporary inconveniences or evils can alter the nature of an eternal truth; nor can the natural weakness of man, though it may form some excuse for his occasional infraction of the rule of right, afford the slightest argument against the rule itself. By the way, you have not noticed the second moral rule—that we should do unto others as we would wish them to do unto us—a divine and most comprehensive law. To me it seems absolutely perfect.

H.—All laws—even divine laws, when laid down in human language—seem to want perfection. This law, for example, if understood literally, might justify crime. One rascal might say to another, I will do to you, my brother, what I wish you to do to me. I will help you to fill your purse with another man's gold.

L.—This is mere sophistry and quite unworthy of you.

H.—You are right, L——, I plead guilty. The fact is, we are losing sight of the literary branch of our discussion, and I wish to return to it, or I would not have startled you with so poor a quibble. I wish to talk over with you what I conceive to be the erroneous views of Scott and Byron, respecting the supposed non-importance of Literature. Byron used to endeavour to persuade his friends that he was prouder of being a good swimmer and a good shot with a pistol, than of being the most popular poet of the time; and Scott seemed to think more of the dignity of Sheriff, than of the glory of the authorship of the *Waverley Novels.* Scott was sincere in his professions—but, though he meant not to deceive others, he surely deceived himself. If he had examined his own heart a little more closely, he would have discovered his mistake.

L.—Perhaps both poets were sincere to a certain extent—Scott more so than Byron—but I can easily believe that even Byron was anxious to be regarded as something else and better than a mere author. In his thirst for applause, he sought golden opinions from all sorts of men, and wished to be supposed to monopolize all manly and noble qualities. It would not do for him, with his high aristocratic pretensions, to be confounded with the gangs of Grub-Street. His ambition was not to be a most distinguished poet only, but to hold his place as a conspicuous individual—the observed of all observers—in private and miscellaneous society—and amongst those classes of men who care little for intellectual greatness.

H.—The lovers of Literature owe to these eminent authors something of a grudge for thus disdaining the means by which they fixed upon themselves the eyes of nations, and secured for themselves an immortality. Lord Byron might have attributed some portion of the personal respect he met with in society to his title and to his physical achievements; but I confess that it is a puzzle how Scott, a plain country gentleman, who was received with such extraordinary honors, by Kings and Princes, and crowded theatres, should have failed to see that he owed his greatness exclusively to literary fame, and that mankind, at all events, differed widely from himself in their estimate of the dignity and the importance of literature, compared with all the ordinary avocations and practical details of private or public life. But he was a throughly manly and modest-minded person, and probably, he wilfully closed his eyes to a truth that he feared might somewhat turn his head. His unaffected simplicity of character—his absence of all pretension—his easy familiarity with the poor—the manner in which he preserved his earliest and humblest friends to his latest day, when all Europe almost idolized his name, and his equal conduct in prosperity and adversity, present a rare and beautiful instance of a heart and mind unaltered by those influences which subject all ordinary men to a trial almost too severe for poor, weak, human nature. Never was a popular writer so utterly free from all vanity or envy.

His warm and eager admiration of Byron's poetry, when he felt that it threw his own into the shade, is a delightful illustration of the disinterestedness and nobility of his nature.

L.—Oh yes—take him for all in all—this century has not produced his fellow, though he had some defects, both as an individual and as an author; and I cannot help saying so, for I am nothing if not critical. As a Novelist he is first in the first class. He does not display perhaps so much knowledge of life and nature as Fielding, nor has he the grace and finish of Goldsmith; but he has infinitely more invention than either, and in the power of poetical description in prose he leaves them both far behind, though Goldsmith beats him in verse. Bulwer has tried hard to persuade the world that Scott was a better Poet than Novelist. Has jealousy blinded his judgment? Was the wish father to the thought?

H.—Scott very happily hit the taste of the time with his metrical romances, or rather, I should say, he produced a pleasant novelty, such as was sure to succeed for a certain time in almost any age. His animated tales, in smooth and easy verse, were read with eagerness and pleasure by vast multitudes, who had no more taste for pure poetry than Bentham or Mill or Macculloch. It was the story they devoured, not the imagery; but they no doubt flattered themselves that they were appreciating a poet when they were merely enjoying the genius of a good story-teller, who had chosen to give his narratives in verse instead of prose. In the same way many prosaic souls read Crabbe's Tales, and fancy they have a taste for poetry. But the true lover of poetry cares comparatively little for the mere narrative, and dwells with never-satiated delight on those lines and images which are the concentration of truth, and the embodiment of the soul of beauty.

L.—Just so. But the ordinary reader of a versified romance is satisfied when he was gone through the story. He then closes the book, and, being familiar with the incidents, has no temptation to return to it. But it is the peculiar privilege of poetry to present a feast "where no crude surfeit reigns,"—to create an

appetite which grows with what it feeds on. We seldom return to prose works once fairly read through, and when we do so, it is rather to refresh the memory, than to renew our delight. But we go over favourite poems till we have them by heart, and repeat them a thousand times, and love and enjoy them the more at every repetition. There is a preciousness in the very words—hallowed as they are by a kind of inspiration. In other forms of literature, we care less for the words because the words are less sacred—less happily chosen, and are not so essentially connected with dearly treasured thoughts or images. Facts and sentiments of a prosaic and utilitarian nature, however valuable in themselves, do not at once receive and reflect a charm from the words in which they are enshrined, as is the case with poetical truths. They are not married, and admit of an easy separation.

H.—If Scott was not a great poet, he was at least a great writer of some sort. There is something Shaksperian almost in the faculty with which he created in his works so many new and striking characters—such as can never pass wholly from the mind. Our friend A—— maintains that he had neither wit nor humour, and expresses his disgust at some of the clumsy would-be-witty introductions to the Novels. I do not think we can deny the possession of true humour to the creator of Baillie Nichol Jarvie and Dominie Sampson, but certainly he had little or no wit, and perhaps even his humour too often turned rather on peculiarities of phrase than traits of character.

L.—He is vastly inferior to Shakspeare, inasmuch as his characters are more external, local, and conventional than those of our great dramatist. I wish there was not such a habit amongst critics of comparing every successful writer with the greatest intellect that the world has yet produced or perhaps ever will. Thus Scott himself, the poorest of critics, calls Joanna Baillie, the female Shakspeare. What critical blasphemy! She has many and undeniable merits, but yet it is cruel to compare her with the greatest Dramatist, perhaps the greatest genius, that the world has yet produced. Scott was nothing as a writer when he laid aside the page of romance. He was not a thinker.

I do not remember a single observation of his above the sheerest commonplace.

H.—Certainly his critical opinions are of little worth. His favorite poets were Dr. Johnson and Crabbe, two of the most prosaic of our verse writers. They are both vigorous and manly, but both deficient in delicacy of taste and high poetical imagination. Crabbe is of the earth earthy. He addresses himself chiefly to the memory of his readers—but he does not, like Rogers, give them the *pleasures* of memory but the *pains*. When his poetry gives us back an image of nature—and it often does so—

> 'Tis Nature pictured too severely true.

Coleridge used to wonder how any one could call Crabbe a poet, as he was absolutely wanting in the first essentials of poetic genius, and the fact recorded by Crabbe's son that his father never gazed with pleasure on a fine landscape, or felt the enchantment of music, sufficiently shows that he mistook his own nature when he put his strong plain sense and close utilitarian observations into the form of verse. Dr. Johnson had the same defects. He had no sense of the harmony of sounds or the loveliness of nature. His poetry, if it deserve the name, was simply the clear expression in compact verse of the movements of a vigorous understanding. His tragedy of *Irene* is, perhaps, the worst drama that was ever written—

> Where passion sleeps and declamation roars.

L.—Scott should not have published his *Halidon Hill*. It discovered at once how far he was from Shakspeare. The drama is perhaps the severest test of the highest poetical genius. It reduced even the vigorous Dryden into insignificance. Vulgar critics thought Scott had only to put his novels into the Dramatic form to rival—perhaps surpass—the Prince of Dramatists. It was a gross mistake. To write a drama and to write a novel are two very different tasks.

H.—Over-praise is a cruel injury. It always proluces a severe

re-action. Let us not deal in "ordorous comparisons," but give Scott credit for the greatness that was peculiarly his own.

L.—With all my heart. If we look at him not as the Historian, the Dramatist, or the Critic, but as a writer of prose fictions, it is impossible not to wonder at the power and variety of his performances. It is, indeed, marvellous that such magnificent works as *Ivanhoe* and *Woodstock* should have been produced with ease and rapidity in the midst of many deep anxieties and the acutest bodily suffering. We cannot praise these works too highly, nor express too warm an admiration of the genius that produced them, so long as we steer clear of unsuitable comparisons.

H.—Strange, indeed, that a man who could write such books should imagine that the routine of official duties or the labors of the mechanic surpass in utility or importance the productions of genius! Not so thought any great thinker of whom I have ever heard. He who produces an immortal book helps to mould, age after age, the minds of millions of men, and adds something to the intellectual character of his country. The good that one single individual can effect in a municipal appointment, or in any trade or profession, or in private life, is pitifully local and limited, if brought into comparison with the effect of a single good book that has taken its place in the literature of the country. What individual, let his profession, or office, or disposition be what it may, can influence the same number of minds as a successful author? The almost limitless effect of the Literature of a nation upon its moral and intellectual character, is too vast and palpable a fact to be denied by the greatest worshippers of what are called practical utilities.

L.—Scott and Byron were disgusted with shallow pretenders to literature and genius, who generally give themselves airs of intolerable self-conceit. These are doubtless a detestable set; but it is absurd to underrate literature on their account. They only prove its real dignity, by showing the impossibility of such people ever grasping its highest honours. We might as well speak with disgust and contempt of painting, when we see a daub

upon a sign-post. Painting is a noble art, requiring high genius for the attainment of excellence in it. In proportion to the difficulty and dignity of the art are its numbers of mere pretenders. But the failures of the crowd, instead of disgusting a great artist with his art, make him love and admire it the more. If excellence in it were easier and less rare, he would cease to be proud of his own labors. When we find that almost any ordinary tradesman can do what he undertakes to do, and that almost all official and professional men get through the details of their office or profession pretty smoothly, we are not disposed to idolize them for their success.

H.—When it was generally known that Scott was involved in the failure of the Messrs. Ballantyne and Company, he was overwhelmed with offers of money and appointments. The Paymaster of the Forces (Lord John Russell) sent him a message to the effect that whatever sum would relieve him from his embarrassments would be immediately advanced from the Treasury. A Government Steamer was placed at his disposal when he required a change of climate. Amongst other extraordinary kindnesses, he received a magnificent anonymous offer of thirty thousand pounds; and a teacher of the harp begged his acceptance of six hundred pounds—the hard savings of years! Did Scott imagine all this enthusiasm and gratitude and generosity was excited by his character as a Sheriff? Could he mistake for a moment the universal feeling, not towards a private Scotch gentleman, who had been unfortunate in his speculations, but towards the author of those works of fiction, founded in general truth, which had given instruction and delight to countless readers, and which had raised the character of the national literature, and spread the author's name to all quarters of the globe? Could he suppose that these attentions would have been paid him had he never written poem or romance, though he had risen to the highest professional distinction in law, politics, physic, or divinity, or had been the greatest printer or book-seller or ship-owner or tallow-chandler in Europe? And are all people in error who display this feeling of gratitude and idolatry towards those men of genius whose "published labors" are an honor to their country,

and a rich legacy to mankind? The public know very well what they are doing when they thus acknowledge the dignity and importance of literature, and pay more respect to their Shakspeares and Miltons than to men who have merely distinguished themselves in what is called the practical business of life.

L.—It is a pity that such men as Scott and Byron should furnish weapons to envious dunces with which to assault their superiors. England has already sufficiently disgraced herself by her ingratitude towards too many of her intellectual benefactors, suffering them to starve to death and then proudly honoring their graves—granting them a monumental stone in reply to their petition for bread. We have something to learn from the French in this respect. They do not postpone their offerings to genius until it is insensible of them. During the last half century there has been a manifest change for the better in the conduct of the British people towards such of their countrymen as are distinguished for genius in literature and science—but there is still great room for improvement, and such false and traitorous depreciation of their own literary pursuits as Scott and Byron were guilty of, is calculated to throw the crowd back again into their former indifference towards contemporary genius.

H.—I would remind the "practical" men of David Hume's tribute to the dignity of letters. "Such a superiority," said he "have the pursuits of literature over all others, that even he who attains but a mediocrity in them merits praise above those who most excel in the common or vulgar professions." I believe I give very nearly his exact words, though I quote from memory.

L.—I would add to Hume's tribute to literature in general that of Burke to poetry:—"Poetry," said he, "is the study of human nature; and as this is the first object of philosophy, poetry will always rank first amongst human compositions."

H.—Before we part, let me read you an autograph letter from Scott to a Mr. Archibald Park, the brother of the celebrated traveller. It is a pleasing addition to the many records of Scott's kindnesses in private life. It shows, too, not only his good nature, but his knowledge of the world, and his practical acquaintance with the business of daily life.

MY DEAR SIR,

In consequence of a letter from Mr. Dundas, of which I sent an extract to Andrew Lang, and which, therefore, I conclude you have seen, I had a conversation to-day with Mr. Earle, Chairman of the Board of Customs, whom I find disposed to be very friendly. The incapacity of age interfering with your holding the Land Waitership at Greenock, he points out two persons either of whom, he thinks, would be induced, from the difference of salary, to accept the Land Waitership, and make a vacancy for you; and it will remain for you to say which of them should be applied to in the first instance.

One is Comptroller at Dunbar—salary £150 a year; this would suit you well for education to the family. The other is Collector at Tobermery, in the Isle of Mull—emolument £200 a year: it is a wild spot, but very pleasant and an increasing village—I know the place, and think it would suit you well; as, when you get your matters arranged, you might have a sheep farm, for you will have plenty of time on your hands, Mr. Earle says. The only objection, is the difficulty of getting education for the children, though I believe there are good School-Masters in Mull, and I have friends there who might be useful to you. The duty is not difficult, and you are put to learn it for six months before your appointment takes place. In Mull, with a little farm, you might live for nothing, and save your salary. But you must weigh the conveniences and disadvantages of both posts in your own mind, and let me know which you prefer, as we will begin with the person holding it, in the first instance, and, should he decline being removed to Greenock, we will try the other. I should think it hard if, with an office of £250 to give away, we cannot find some one to make a move so as to open one of £150 or £200.

I remain, in haste,
Your Obedt. Servant.
(Signed) WALTER SCOTT.

Edinborough,
17th Feb. 1816.

Perhaps, if you could do it without much inconvenience, it would be worth your while to take a ride to town.

To Mr. Archibald Park,
Lewinshope, care of Mr. Andrew Lang,
Sheriff-Clerk, Selkirk.

No. XVIII.

CARLYLE—MACAULAY—SYDNEY SMITH.

H.—What do you think of Carlyle's work on Cromwell?

A.—I do not greatly like it; it is too much of a bookseller's book—it is *made up*—it has the air of a trade-speculation.

H.—It has many magnificent passages from the pen of Carlyle, and the letters of Cromwell throw a light upon some points of his character that were not before done justice to. Carlyle shows Cromwell, with all his faults, to have been a sincere man —an *English* Man.

A.—Carlyle cannot write a book without throwing some brilliant passages into it, but there is always a want of keeping and equality in his style. If it be sometimes impressive, it is often unpleasing from its perpetual straining after strong effects. Upon the whole, it is a monstrosity. His fancy is full of night-meteors. There is no broad light of day in it. It is showy, but fitful, convulsive and unhealthy.

H.—There is nothing unhealthy in Carlyle's intellect. A more robust mind—or a clearer understanding—is possessed by no writer of these times, and many noble thinkers have acknowledged in him their "guide, philosopher, and friend."

A.—I do not consent to settle a question of this nature by the authority of other men. I think myself qualified to form an opinion of my own, and in *my* judgment, Carlyle's manner of writing is utterly unnatural. That it is not natural to the man himself, but a mere affectation, is clear from the fact that he originally wrote in a style totally different from his present one. Look at his *Life of Schiller*. It is not deformed by any of those studied quaintnesses and desperate struggles to be startlingly fine which he now displays.

H.—When Carlyle wrote the *Life of Schiller* he was a young

man, and less familiar with the German writers, for whom he now entertains such enthusiastic admiration. It is easy to trace the gradual progress of his style towards Anglo-Germanism. It was probably an almost unconscious change; and at all events, custom has made it to him a sort of second nature. He talks by his own fireside in precisely the same style in which he writes, and there is a sort of keeping in his turn of thought and turn of expression.

A.—Do you mean to say there is no straining after effect—no frog-like swelling rivalry of the bull—in his strange *History of the French Revolution,* if such a thing may be called a history at all?

H.—To say that he tries to do his best is only saying that he does what all other authors have done before him. That he has not always commanded that art which conceals its own exertions, may be readily admitted. Even the great Milton, has betrayed anxiety and toil and let the reader see that the *Paradise Lost* was not composed with the ease and carelessness and rapidity with which the editor of a daily newspaper rattles off his leaders.

A.—But if we see Milton labor we also see him succeed. He never lamentably fails—whereas Carlyle aims at a high mark and his misses out-number his hits.

H.—After all, this question must be admitted to be one of taste—on which Doctors are allowed to differ—as you and I certainly do, and very widely. In my opinion, Carlyle tries to say fine and true things, and generally succeeds. His failures are not the rule but the exception, and they are never ignominiously palpable. There is always some redeeming quality in his least felicitous performances. His *worst* things are often better than the *best* things of ordinary writers. There is some substance in them.

A.—He has an imitator* in America—I hope he will never have one in England. I should as much regret to see English Literature Germanized as Frenchified. You know how the

* Emerson.

miscalled Augustan age of Anne was injured by a French taste. Let us, if possible, preserve the wholesome well of English Literature undefiled by the impurities of Germanism.

H.—The Germans are deep and original thinkers. I do not suppose that an infusion of their powerful thoughts would injure the character of English Literature.

I must really beg your attention to a few specimens of the picturesque force of Carlyle's expressions. They indicate that sort of power which, when we meet with it in the form of verse, we style poetic genius. Let us first dip into his *French Revolution* and bring up a few jewels and precious stones—" something rich and strange."

It is well said, in every object there is inexhaustible meaning; the eye sees in it what the eye brings means of seeing? To Newton and to Newton's dog, Diamond, what a different pair of universes; while the painting on the optical retina of both, was, most likely, the same.

Yes, Manpeou, pucker those sinister brows of thine, and peer out on it with thy malign rat's eyes: it is a questionable case.

The man (Louis XV.) so nourished and decorated, thenceforth named Royal, does verily bear rule; and is said, and even thought, to be, for example, '*prosecuting conquests in Flanders,*' when he lets himself, like luggage, be carried thither: and no light luggage; covering miles of road. For he has his unblushing Chateauroux, with her band boxes and rouge pots, at his side, &c &c. With such a flood of loud jingling appurtenances (kettles, fiddles, &c. &c.) does he lumber along, *prosecuting his conquests in Flanders:* wonderful to behold.

DEATH IN THE PALACE.

There is the pale grinning shadow of Death, ceremoniously ushered along by another grinning shadow of Etiquette: at intervals the growl of chapel organs, like prayer by machinery, proclaiming, as in a kind of horrid diabolic horse-laughter, *vanity of vanities, all is vanity!*

Poor Louis! With these it is a hollow phantasmagory, where, like mimes, they mope and mowl, and utter false sounds for hire; but with thee it is frightful earnest.

Frightful to all men is death; from of old named King of Terrors. Our little compact home of an existence where we dwelt complaining, yet as in a home, is passing in dark agonies into an unknown of separation, foreigness, unconditional possibility.

Unhappy man! there as thou turnest in dull agony, on thy bed of weariness, what a thought is thine! Purgatory and Hell-fire now all too possible in the prospect: in the retrospect—alas! what thing didst thou do that were not better undone; what mortal didst thou generously help; what sorrow hadst thou, mercy on? Do the five hundred thousand ghosts who sank so shamefully on so many battle fields from Rossback to Quebec, that thy harlot might take revenge for an epigram, crowd around thee in this hour, cumbering God's diligent Creation for a time?

Was Louis no wickeder than this or the other private Donothing and Eatall; such as we often enough see under the name of Man, and even Man of Pleasure?

The new Louis with his Court is rolling towards Choisy, through the summer afternoon; the Royal tears still flow, but a word mis-pronounced by Monsigneur D'Artois sets them all laughing, and they weep no more. Light mortals, how ye walk your light life-minuet over bottomless abysses, divided from you by a film.

Danton carried a high look in the death-cart. Not so Camille; it is but one week, and all is so topsy-turvied; angel wife left weeping; love, riches, revolutionary fame, left all at the prison gate; carniverous rabble now howling round. Palpable, and yet incredible; like a madman's dream! Camille struggles and writhes; his shoulders shuffle the loose coat off them, which hangs knotted, the hands tied: "Calm, my friend," Danton was heard to ejaculate: "O my wife, my well-beloved, I shall never see thee more then!"—but, interrupting himself: "Danton, no weakness!" He said to Herault-Sechelles stepping forward to embrace him; "Our heads will meet *there*"—in the headsman's sack! His last words were to Samson, the headsman himself: "Thou wilt show my head to the people; it is worth showing." So passes, like a gigantic mass of valor, ostentation, fury, affection, and wild revolutionary manhood, this Danton to his unknown home. He was of Arcissur-Aube; born of "good farmer-people" there. He had many sins; but one worst sin he had not, that of Cant. No hollow Formalist, deceptive and self-deceptive, *ghastly* to the natural sense, was this; but a very Man, with all his dross he was a Man; fiery-real, from the great fire-bosom of Nature herself. He saved France from Brunswick; he walked straight his own wild-road, whither it led him. He may live for some generations in the memory of men.

You see we have not to search for such picturesque and forcible passages as these, We open the book at random, and find them thickly strewn on every page. Whether you like them or not

you must admit that they have *character*. They are any thing but commonplace and feeble.

A.—There is great power of some sort in this kind of writing, but I like less appearance of effort. If we allow Carlyle himself to write in this style, it would never do to encourage "the rising generation" to regard it as a model.

H.—Perhaps you may like his critical papers better. Let us read first a paragraph on poetry from his essay on Goethe, and two or three passages from his masterly critique on Burns—

POETRY.

The first is, nowise to suppose that poetry is a superficial, cursory business, which may be seen through to the very bottom, so soon as one inclines to cast his eye on it. We reckon it the falsest of all maxims that a true Poem can be adequately *tasted;* can be judged of "as men judge of a dinner," by some internal *tongue*, that shall decide on the matter at once and irrevocably. Of the poetry which supplies spouting-clubs, and circulates in circulating libraries, we speak not here. That is quite another species, which has circulated, and will circulate, and ought to circulate, in all times ; but for the study of which no man is required to give rules, the rules being already given by the thing itself. We speak of that poetry which Masters write, which aims not at furnishing a languid mind with fantastic "shows and indolent emotions," but at incorporating the everlasting reason of man in forms visible to his sense, and suitable to it: and of this we say that to know it is no slight task; but rather that being the essence of all science, it requires the purest of all study for knowing it. "What!" cries the reader, "are we to *study* poetry? To pore over it as we do over Fluxions?" Reader, it depends upon your object: if you want only *amusement* choose your book, and you get along without study, excellently well. "But is not Shakspeare plain, visible to the very bottom, without study?" cries he. Alas, no, gentle reader; we cannot think so; we do not find that he is visible to the very bottom even to those that profess the study of him. It has been our lot to read some criticisms on Shakspeare, and to hear a great many; but for the most part they amounted to no such "visibility." Volumes we have seen that were simply one huge interjection printed over three hundred pages.

POETRY OF BURNS.

All that remains of Burns, the writings he has left, seem to us, as we hinted above, no more than a poor mutilated fraction of what was in him; brief, broken glimpses of a genius that could never show itself complete; that wanted all things for completeness: culture, leisure, true effort, nay

even length of life. His poems are, with scarcely any exception, mere occasional effusions, poured forth with little premeditation; expressing, by such means as offered, the passion, opinion, or humour of the hour. Never in one instance was it permitted him to grapple with any subject with the full collection of his strength, to fuse and mould it in the concentrated fire of his genius. To try by the strict rules of Art such imperfect fragments would be at once unprofitable and unfair. Nevertheless, there is something in these poems, marred and defective as they are, which forbids the most fastidious student of poetry to pass them by. Some sort of enduring quality they must have: for, after fifty years of the wildest vicissitudes in poetic taste, they still continue to be read; nay, are read more and more eagerly, more and more extensively; and this not only by literary virtuosos, and that class upon whom transitory causes operate most strongly, but by all classes, down to the most hard, unlettered, and truly natural class, who read little, and especially no poetry, except because they find pleasure in it. The grounds of so singular and wide a popularity, which extends, in a literal sense, from the palace to the hut, and over all regions where the English tongue is spoken, are well worth enquiring into. After every just deduction it seems to imply some rare excellence in these works. What is that excellence?

To answer this question will not lead us far. The excellence of Burns is, indeed, among the rarest, whether in poetry or prose; but, at the same time, it is plain and easily recognised—his *sincerity*, his indisputable air of truth. Here are no fabulous woes or joys; no hollow fantastic sentimentalities; no wire-drawn refinings, either in thought or feeling, the passion that is traced before us has glowed in a living heart, the opinion he utters has risen in his own understanding, and been a light to his own steps. He does not write from hearsay, but from sight and experience; it is the scenes that he has lived and laboured amidst, that he describes: those scenes, rude and humble as they are, have kindled beautiful emotions in his soul, noble thoughts, and definite resolves; and he speaks forth what is in him, not from any outward call of vanity or interest, but because his heart is too full to be silent. He speaks it with such melody and modulation as he can; 'in homely rustic jingle;' but it is his own, and genuine.

BURNS.

Independently of the essential gift of poetic feeling, as we have now attempted to describe it, a certain rugged sterling worth pervades whatever Burns has written; a virtue, as of green fields and mountain breezes, dwells in his poetry, it is redolent of natural life, and hardy natural men. There is a decisive strength in him, and yet a sweet native gracefulness: he is tender, he is vehement, yet without constraint or too visible effort;

he melts the heart, or inflames it, with a power which seems habitual and familiar to him. We see that in this man there was the gentleness, the trembling pity of a woman, with the deep earnestness, the force and passionate ardour of a hero. Tears lie in him, and consuming fire; as lightning lurks in the drops of the summer cloud. He has a resonance in his bosom for every note of human feeling; the high and the low, the sad, the ludicrous, the joyful, are welcome in their turns to his 'lightly-moved and all-conceiving spirit.' And observe with what a fierce prompt force he grasps his subject, be it what it may! How he fixes, as it were, the full image of the matter in his eye; full and clear in every lineament; and catches the real type and essence of it, amid a thousand accidents and superficial circumstances, no one of which misleads him! Is it of reason; some truth to be discovered? No sophistry, no vain surface logic detains him; quick, resolute, unerring, he pierces through into the marrow of the question, and speaks his verdict with an emphasis that cannot be forgotten. Is it of description; some visual object to be represented? No poet of any age or nation is more graphic than Burns: the characteristic features disclose themselves to him at a glance; three lines from his hand, and we have a likeness. And, in that rough dialect, in that rude, often awkward metre, so clear and definite a likeness! It seems a draughtsman waking with a burnt stick, and yet the burin of a Retzsch is not more expressive or exact.

INFLUENCE OF THE SONGS OF BURNS.

It is on his songs, as we believe, that Burns' chief influence as an author will ultimately be found to depend: nor, if our Fletcher's aphorism is true, shall we account this a small influence. "Let me make the songs of a people," said he, "and you shall make its laws." Surely if ever any Poet might have equalled himself with Legislators, on this ground, it was Burns. His Songs are already part of the mother-tongue, not of Scotland only, but of Britain, and of the millions that in all ends of the earth speak a British language. In hut and hall, as the heart unfolds itself in many-coloured joy and woe of existence, the name, the voice of that joy and that woe, is the name and voice which Burns has given them. Strictly speaking, perhaps, no British man has so deeply affected the thoughts and feelings of so many men, as this solitary and altogether private individual, with means apparently the humblest.

A.—All this is sound criticism, I most readily admit; and the style is to me less objectionable than that which characterizes the pasages you quoted from the History of the French Revolution; it is more English.

H.--Here is a striking description of the death of Mirabeau.

MIRABEAU.

The silence of a whole People, the wakeful toil of Cabanis, Friend and Physician, skills not: on Saturday, the second day of April, Mirabeau feels that the last of the days has risen for him; that on this day, he has to depart and be no more. His death is Titanic, as his life has been. Lit up for the last time, in the glare of coming dissolution, the mind of the man is all glowing and burning; utters itself in sayings, such as men long remember. He longs to live, yet acquiesces in death, argues not with the inexorable. His speech is wild and wondrous: unearthly Phantasies dancing now their torch-dance round his soul, the soul itself looking out, fire-radiant, motionless, girt together for that great hour! At times comes a beam of light from him on the world he is quitting. "I carry in my heart the death-dirge of the French monarchy; the dead remains of it will now be the spoil of the factions." Or again, when he heard the common fire, what is characteristic too: "Have we the Achilles' Funeral already?" So likewise, while some friend is supporting him: "Yes, support that head; would I could bequeath it thee?" For the man dies as he has lived: self-conscious --conscious of a world looking on. He gazes forth on the young spring, which for him will never be summer. The sun has risen; he says: "Si ce n'est pas là Dieu, c'est du moins son cousin germain." Death has mastered the outworks; power of speech is gone: the citadel of the heart still holding out: the moribund giant, passionately, by sign, demands paper and pen: writes his passionate demand for opium, to end these agonies. The sorrowful Doctor shakes his head: '*Dormir*, to sleep,' writes the other, passionately pointing at it! so dies a gigantic, Heathen and Titan; stumbling blindly, undismayed, down to his rest. At half-past eight in the morning, Doctor Petit, standing at the foot of the bed, says, "Il ne souffre plus." His suffering, and his working, are now ended.

Even so, ye silent Patriot multitudes, all ye men of France: this man is rapt away from you. He has fallen suddenly, without bending till he broke; as a tower falls, smitten by sudden lightning. His word ye shall hear no more, his guidance follow no more. The multitudes depart, heart-struck; spread the sad tidings. How touching is the loyalty of men to their sovereign man! All theatres, public amusements, close; no joyful meeting can be held in these nights, joy is not for them: the People break in upon private dancing parties, and sullenly command that they cease. Of such dancing-parties apperently but two came to light; and these also have gone out. The gloom is universal: never in this city was such sorrow for one death; never since that old night when Louis XII. departed, "and the *Crieurs des corps* went sounding their bells, and crying along the streets:

Le bon roi Louis, père du people, est mort. The good King Louis, Father of the People, is dead!" King Mirabeau is now the lost King; and one may say, with little exaggeration, all the People mourn for him.

H.—Is this not a powerful picture? But I have not done yet; I must now read you a singularly *suggestive* passage about a rustic in the times of Charles, and some truly graphic sketches of Boswell and Johnson.

A RUSTIC.

Meanwhile, quitting these airy regions, let one bethink him how impressive the smallest historical *fact* may become, as contrasted with the grandest *fictitious event*! what an incalculable force lies for us in this consideration: The thing which I here hold imaged in my mind did actually occur; was, in very truth, an element in the system of the All, whereof I too form part; had therefore, and has, through all time, an authentic being; is not a dream, but a *reality!* We ourselves can remember reading, in *Lord Clarendon*, with feelings perhaps some how accidentally opened to it,—certainly with a depth of impression strange to us then and now,—that insignificant-looking passage, where Charles, after the battle of Worcester, glides down, with Squire Careless, from the Royal Oak, at night fall, being hungry: how, "making a shift to get over hedges and ditches, after walking at least eight or nine miles which were the more grievous to the king by the weight of his boots (for he could not put *them* off when he cut off his hair, for want of shoes,) before morning they came to *a poor cottage, the owner whereof, being a Roman Catholic, was known to Careless.*" How this poor drudge, being knocked up from his snoring, "carried them into a little barn full of hay, which was a better lodging than he had for himself;" and by and by, not without difficulty, brought his Majesty "a piece of bread and a great pot of buttermilk," saying candidly that "he himself lived by his daily labour and that what he had brought him was the fare he and his wife had:" on which nourishing diet his Majesty, staying upon the haymow, feeds thankfully for two days; and then departs, under new guidance, having first changed clothes, down to the very shirt and "old pair of shoes," with his landlord, and so, as worthy Bunyan has it, "goes on his way, and sees him no more."* Singular enough, if we will think of it! This then was a genuine flesh-and-blood Rustic of the year 1651: he did actually swallow bread and buttermilk (not having ale and bacon), and do field-labour: with these hobnailed 'shoes' has sprawled through mud-roads in winter, and, jocund or not, driven his team a-field in summer: he made bargains; had chafferings and higglings, now a sore heart, now a glad one; was born; was a son, was a father; toiled in many ways, forced to it, till the strength was all worn out of him: and then lay down "to rest his galled back," and sleep there till the long-distant morning!—How comes it, that he alone of all the British rustics who tilled and lived along with him, on whom the blessed sun on that same "fifth day of

* *History of the Rebellion*, iii., 625.

September' was shining, should have chanced to rise on us; that this poor pair of clouted Shoes, out of the million million hides that have been tanned, and cut, and worn, should still subsist, and hang visibly together? We see him but for a moment, the blanket of the Night is rent asunder, so that we behold and see, and then closes over him—forever.

BOSWELL.

In that cocked nose, cocked partly in triumph over his weaker fellow-creatures, partly to snuff up the smell of coming pleasure, and scent it from afar; in those bag-cheeks, hanging like half-filled wine-skins, still able to contain more; in that coarsely protruded shelf-mouth, that fat dew-lapped chin; in all this, who sees not sensuality, pretension, boisterous imbecility enough · much that could not have been ornamental in the temper of a great man's overfed great man (what the Scotch name *flunky*), though it had been more natural there. The under part of Boswell's face is of a low, almost brutish character.

Unfortunately, on the other hand, what great and genuine good lay in him was no wise so self-evident. That Boswell was a hunter after spiritual Notabilities, that he loved such and longed, and even crept and crawled to be near them; that he first (in old Touchwood Auchinlecks' phraseology) "took on with Paoli,' and then, being off with "the Corsican landlouper," took on with a schoolmaster, "ane that keeped a schule, and ca'd it an academy;" that he did all this, and could not help doing it, we account a very singular merit. The man, once for all, had an "open sense," ean open loving heart, which so few have: where excellence existed, he was compelled to acknowledge it; was drawn towards it, and (let the old sulpher-brand of a Laird say what he liked) *could not but* walk with it,—if not as superior, if not as equal, then as inferior and lackey—better so than not at all. If we reflect now that this love of excellence had not only such an evil *nature* to triumph over, but also what an *education* and social position withstood it and weighed it down, its innate strength, victorious over all these things, may astonish us. Consider what an inward impulse there must have been, how many mountains of impediment hurled aside, before the Scottish Laird could, as humble servant, embrace the knees (the bosom was not permitted him) of the English Dominie!

DR. JOHNSON.

If we ask now by what endowment it mainly was that Johnson realized such a life for himself and others; what quality of character the main phenomena of his life may be most naturally deduced from, and his other qualities most naturally subordinated to, in our conception of him, perhaps the answer were: the quality of courage, of Valour; that Johnson was a Brave Man. The courage that can go forth, once and away, to Chalk-Farm, and have itself shot, and snuffed out, with decency, is nowise wholly what we mean here. Such courage we indeed esteem an exceeding small matter; capable of co-existing with a life full of falsehood, feebleness, poltroonery, and despicability. Nay oftener it is Cowardice rather that produces the result: for consider, is the Chalk-Farm Pistoleer inspired with any reasonable belief and determination; or is he hounded on by haggard indefinable fear,—how he will be *cut* at public places, and "plucked geese of the neighbour-

hood" will wag their tongues at him, a plucked goose ? If he go then, and be shot without shrieking, or audible uproar, it is well for him: nevertheless there is nothing amazing in it. Courage to manage all this has not perhaps been denied to any man, or to any woman. Thus, do not recruiting sergeants drum through the streets of manufacturing towns, and collect ragged losels enough; every one of whom, if once dressed in red, and trained a little, will receive fire cheerfully for the small sum of one shilling *per diem*, and have the soul blown out of him at last, with perfect propriety. The courage that dares only *die*, is, on the whole, no sublime affair: necessary, indeed, yet universal; pitiful when it begins to parade itself. On this Globe of ours, there are some thirty-six persons that manifest it, seldom with the smallest failure, during every second of time. Nay look at Newgate; do not the offscourings of creation, when condemned to the gallows, as if they were not men but vermin, walk thither with decency, and even to the scowls and hootings of the whole universe give their stern good-night in silence? What is to be undergone only once, we may undergo; what must be, comes almost of its own accord. Considered as a Duellist, what a poor figure does the fiercest Irish Whiskerando make, compared with any English Game-cock, such as you may buy for fifteen pence.

The courage we desire and prize, is not the courage to die decently, but to live manfully. This, when by God's grace it has been given, lies deep in the soul, like genial heat, fosters all other virtues and gifts; without it they could not live. In spite of our innumerable Waterloos and Peterloos, and such campaigning as there has been, this courage we allude to, and call the only true one, is perhaps rarer in these last ages, than it has been in any other since the Saxon Invasion under Hengist. Altogether extinct it can never be among men; otherwise the species Man were no longer for this world: here and there, in all times, under various guises, men are sent hither not only to demonstrate but exhibit it, and testify, as from heart to heart that it is still possible, still practicable.

Johnson, in the eighteenth century, and as Man of Letters, was one of such; and, in good truth, "the bravest of the brave." What mortal could have more to war with? Yet, as we saw, he yielded not, faltered not; he fought, and even, such was his blessedness, prevailed. Who so will understand what it is to have a man's heart, may find that, since the time of John Milton, no braver heart had beat in any English bosom than Samuel Johnson now bore.

H.—I have never read to you, I believe, any of the autograph letters of Carlyle. Here is one that is highly interesting and thoroughly *Carlyleish.*

5, Cheyne Row, Chelsea, London,
19th December, 1837.

MY DEAR SIR,

Your courteous gift* with the letter accompanying it, reached me only about a week ago, though dated 20th June, almost at the opposite point of

* The first edition of the *Literary Leaves.*

the year. Whether there has been undue delay or not is unknown to me, but at any rate on my side there ought to be no delay.

I have read your volume, what little of it was known to me before, and the much that was not known, I can say, with true pleasure. It is written as few volumes in these days are, with fidelity, with successful care, with insight and conviction as to matter, with clearness and graceful precision as to manner; in a word, it is the impress of a mind stored with elegant accomplishments, gifted with an eye to see, and a heart to understand;—a welcome, altogether recommendable, book. More than once I have said to myself and others, how many parlour firesides are there this winter in England, at which this volume, could one give credible announcement of its quality, would be right pleasant company! There are very many, *could* one give the announcement: but no such announcement *can* be given; therefore the parlour firesides must even put up with ————, or what other stuff chance shovels in their way; and read, though with malediction, all the time. It is a great pity; but no man can help it. We are now arrived seemingly pretty near the point where all criticism and proclamation in matters literary has degenerated into an inane jargon, incredible, unintelligibie, inarticulate as the cawing of choughs and rooks: and many things, in that as in other provinces, are in a state of painful and rapid transition. A good book has no way of recommending itself except slowly, and as it is were accidentally from hand to hand. The man that wrote it must abide his time. He needs, as indeed all men do, the *faith* that this world is built, not on falsehood and jargon, but on truth and reason; that no good thing done by any creature of God was, is, or ever can be *lost*, but will surely do the service appointed for it, and be found among the general sum total and all of things after long times, nay after all time, and through eternity itself. "Let him cast his bread upon the waters," therefore, cheerful of heart; "he will find it after many days." I know not why I write all this to you; it comes very spontaneously from me. Let it be your satisfaction, the highest a man can have in this world, that the talent intrusted to you did not lie useless, but was turned to account, and proved itself to be a talent; and the "publishing world" can receive it altogether according to their own pleasure, raise it high on the house-tops, or trample it low into the street kennels; that is not the question at all; the *thing* remains precisely what it was, after never such raising and never such depressing and trampling, there is no change whatever in *it*. I bid you go on, and prosper.

One thing grieves me: the tone of sadness, I might say of settled melancholy, that runs through all your utterances of yourself. It is not right, it is wrong; and yet how shall I reprove you? If you knew me, you would triumphantly answer, take the beam out of thine own eye! Truly it is a sore compensation for any spiritual endowment bestowed on a man, that it

is accompanied, or one might say *preceded,* as the first origin of it, always by a delicacy of organization, which, in a world like ours, is then to have itself manifoldly afflicted, tormented, darkened down into sorrow. You feel yourself an exile in the East; but in the West too it is exile. I know not where under the sun it is not exile. Here in the Fog-Babylon, amid mud and smoke, in the infinite din of "vociferous platitude," and quack out-bellowing quack, with truth and pity on all hands ground under the wheels, —can one call it a home, or a world? It is a waste chaos, where we have to swim painfully for our life. The utmost a man can do is to swim, then, like a man, and hold his peace. For this seems to me a great truth, in any exile or chaos whatsoever, that sorrow was *not* given us for sorrow's sake, but always and infallibly as a lesson to us from which we are to learn somewhat; and which, the somewhat once *learned,* ceases to be sorrow. I do believe this, and study in general "to consume my own smoke,"—not indeed without very ugly out-puffs at times! Allan Cunningham is the best; he tells me that always as one grows older, one grows happier; a thing also which I really can believe.

But as for you, my dear Sir, you have other work to do in the East than grieve. Are there not beautiful things there, glorious things; wanting only an eye to note them, a hand to record them? If I had the command over you, I would say, read *Paul et Virginie;** then, read the *Chaumiere Indienne;* gird yourself together for a right effort, and *go and do likewise,* or better! I mean what I say. The East has its own phases; there are

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* In the *History of the French Revolution,* Mr. Carlyle, in the following passage, makes particular mention of Saint Pierre's *Paul et Virginie:*—

"Still more significant are two books produced on the eve of the ever-memorable explosion itself, and read eagerly by all the world: Saint Pierre's *Paul et Virginie,* and Louvet's *Chevalier de Faublas.* Note-worthy books; which may be considered as the last speech of old Feudal France. In the first, there rises melodiously, as it were, the wail of a moribund world: everywhere wholesome Nature in unequal conflict with diseased perfidious Art; cannot escape from it in the lowest hut, in the remotest island of the sea. Ruin and death must strike down the loved one; and, what is most significant of all, death even here, not by necessity, but by etiquette. What a world of prurient corruption lies visible on that super-sublime of modesty! Yet on the whole, our good Saint Pierre is musical, poetical, though most morbid: we will call his book, the swan song of old dying France.

Louvet's again, let no man account musical. Truly, if this wretched Faublas is a death-speech, it is one under the gallows, and by a felon that does not repent. Wretched cloaca of a book; without depth even as a cloaca! What "picture of French society" is here? Picture properly of nothing, if not of the mind that gave it out as some sort of picture. Yet symptom of much; above all, of the world that could nourish itself thereon."

things there which the West yet knows not of; and one heaven covers both. He that has an eye let him look!

I hope you forgive me this style I have got into. It seems to me on reading your book as if we had been long acquainted in some measure; as if one might speak to you right from the heart. I hope we shall meet some day or other. I send you my constant respect and good wishes; and am, and remain,

Yours very truly always,

To Capt. D. L. Richardson. T. CARLYLE.

A.—This epistle is full of character, but it has too melancholy a tinge—too solemn a tone. The fault of Carlyle's philosophy is that it dwells too much on the darker side of the picture of life. He sees only the littleness and the vanity of human nature. Carlyle's despondency is well contrasted with Leigh Hunt's hopefulness and sunny-mindedness, in a paper in the *New Spirit of the Age,* in which there is an anecdote so illustrative of the intellectual pecularities of these eminent men, that I am sure you will like to hear it read to you:—

A familiar illustration sometimes helps a philosophical difficulty. The following story, which is highly characteristic of the parties, and is nevertheless of a kind that may be told without violating the trustfulness of private intercourse, will very well answer our present purpose. Leigh Hunt and Carlyle were once present among a small party of equally well known men. It chanced that the conversation rested with these two—both first-rate talkers, and the others sat well pleased to listen. Leigh Hunt had said something about the Islands of the blest, or El Dorado, or the Millennium, and was flowing on, in his bright and hopeful way, when Carlyle dropt some heavy tree-trunk across Hunt's pleasant stream, and banked it up with philosophical doubts and objections at every interval of the speaker's joyous progress. But the unmitigated Hunt never ceased his overflowing anticipations, nor the saturnine Carlyle his infinite demurs to those finite flourishings. The listeners laughed and applauded by turns; and had now fairly pitted them against each other, as the philosopher of hopefulness and of the unhopeful. The contest continued, with all that ready wit and philosophy, that mixture of pleasantry and profundity, that extensive knowledge of books and character, with their ready application in argument or illustration, and that perfect ease and good-nature, which distinguish each of these men. The opponents were so well matched, that it was quite clear the contest would never come to an end. But the night

was far advanced, and the party broke up. They all sallied forth; and leaving the close room, the candles, and the arguments behind them, suddenly found themselves in presence of a most brilliant star-light night. They all looked up. "Now," thought Hunt, "Carlyle's done for !—he can have no answer to that!" "There!" shouted Hunt, "look up there! look at that glorious harmony, that sings with infinite voices an eternal song of hope in the soul of man." Carlyle looked up. They all remained silent, to hear what he would say. They began to think he was silenced at last—he was a mortal man. But out of that silence came a few low-toned words, in a broad Scotch accent. And who, on earth, could have anticipated what the voice said? "Eh! it's a *sad* sight!"—Hunt sat down on a stone step. They all laughed—then looked very thoughtful. Had the finite measured itself with infinity, instead of surrendering itself up to the influence? Again they laughed—then bade each other good night, and betook themselves homeward with slow and serious pace. There might be some reason for sadness, too. That brilliant firmament probably contained infinite worlds, each full of struggling and suffering beings—of beings who had to die—for life in the stars implies that those bright worlds should also be full of graves; but all that life, like ours, knowing not whence it came, nor whither it goeth, and the brilliant universe in its great movement having, perhaps, no more certain knowledge of itself, nor of its ultimate destination, than hath one of the suffering specks that compose this small spot we inherit.

H.—This is a good anecdote, and brings the men and the scene before us.

A.—You say that Carlyle talks in the style in which he writes. It must sound oddly in unaccustomed ears.

H.—Perhaps it does, for the first few minutes, but where there are great force and freshness of thought and depth of feeling, any peculiarities of this nature are easily overlooked or forgiven, or become, perhaps, even pleasing. Common-place listeners might be puzzled, but no man of a thoughtful turn could fail to regard Carlyle's conversation as a real treat.

A.—What sort of man is he in manners and personal appearance? Did he disappoint you?

H.—Why yes—I confess he rather startled me on these points. I expected to see a pale, scholar-like, or half-parson-like sort of man—something rather of the recluse than the man of the world.

A.—Well, and what sort of creature is he?

H.—A tall athletic Scotchman, with some ungainliness, but no timidity or *mauvaise honté*. His features are a little coarse, but very expressive, and by no means unpleasing. His look is shrewd, yet kindly; but if you met him as a stranger you would hardly take him for a deep and delicate thinker. His voice is loud, his accent broad Scotch, his movements angular. You see at once that he is no ordinary person, though you would not perhaps place him in the list of imaginative and sensitive men of genius, until he begins to converse freely. You then discover that he has both strength and refinement of intellect and great fervour of feeling.

A.—Is he as good a talker as Macaulay?

H.—He is not so neat, brilliant, and epigrammatic, but he is more cordial, and exhibits a greater ardour and generosity. Carlyle opens the hearer's heart—Macaulay closes it. There is an under current of sarcasm and contempt in Macaulay, as if he felt it a condescension to talk with inferiors, and, with all his external courtesy, people rarely feel quite at their ease in his company. Carlyle exhibits none of this offensive condescension. His associates feel *safe* in his presence, and do not anticipate that he will laugh at his retreating guest as soon as the door is closed behind him.

A.—You do not surely believe that Macaulay so treats his visitors?

H.—I do not say that he does; but he always left on my mind the impression that he *might* do so, without much pain to his conscience. He is amongst the *sneerers*—a race I abominate. I always dreaded to ask him his opinion of any man whom I esteemed and loved, and, though he uniformly treated me very kindly and courteously, I used to remember the fine observations of Mrs. Norton, quoted by Leigh Hunt in a note to his *Blue Stocking Revels*—"We are too apt to think only how *we* are treated; too little accustomed to observe what is the treatment of *others* by the same person. Watch and weigh. If a man speak evil of his friends to you, he will also speak evil of you to his friends. Kind and caressing words are easily spoken, and pleasant to

hear; but the man who bears a kind heart bears it to all and not to one only. He who appears to love only the friend he speaks to, and slanders or speaks coldly of the rest, loves no one but himself."

A.—What exquisite observers of society are intelligent women! Every word of that quotation is perfect truth. Mrs. Norton is something of a poetess, too. The *Quarterly* dubs her the female Byron.

H.—Her verses have more strength, but less grace than those of Mrs. Hemans.

A.—I have just been reading Macaulay's article on Lord Bacon, to which you once called my attention.

H.—It is a magnificent essay.

A.—As the name and writings of Bacon were not entirely unknown to the world before the appearance of this article, and as the edition of his works by Mr. Basil Montagu, which is the ostensible subject of the criticism, was published several years ago, one cannot help wondering a little what could induce the editor of the *Edinburgh Review* to occupy upwards of a hundred pages (more than a third of the whole number) with a notice of this nature, when so many publications of more immediate interest, and less established character, were demanding his attention. Nothing but some very extraordinary intellectual fitness in the reviewer for the task, or his possession of new and peculiar sources of information, would seem to justify the insertion of so lengthy an essay on so old a subject. Now I cannot help thinking that Macaulay is not precisely the person to whom the world is likely to be indebted for any very important and influential decision, as to the character and writings of one of the most gigantic human intellects that have ever been devoted to the study of Philosophy. The Editor of the *Edinburgh Review* was himself painfully conscious of the impropriety of which he was guilty, in thus occupying so disproportionate a share of the number with a single article on a stale subject, and apologized for not dividing it, on the plea that such a division of it would have been contrary to his general practice; as if it were not

quite as much in opposition to his general practice to insert articles of such extraordinary length in any way on old editions of old books.

H.—I think the extraordinary merit of the criticism would have justified a much greater irregularity in the making up of the *Review*. I never heard any one before complain of the length of the article. You surely do not mean to deny its merit?

A.—I do not think that there is any thing very profound or very new in it. In his estimate of Lord Bacon's intellectual character, he merely echoes the general judgment, and for most of the materials upon which he founds his observations, he acknowledges himself indebted to Mr. Montagu himself. He differs indeed from that gentleman in his account of the personal character of Lord Bacon, of which he thinks he has taken too favorable a view, but this editorial partiality is so common a case, that every reader takes an editor's statement of his author's virtues with many grains of salt. The extraordinary outcry that was raised against poor Bowles, for denying the infallibility of a Pope who had won the idolatry of Byron, is a sufficient proof that the public so generally expect unqualified admiration in the editor of an author's works, that it was hardly worth the *Edinburgh Reviewer's* while to enter upon the easy but ungracious task of proving that Mr. Montagu had spoken rather too kindly of a great man, who, with so rare and magnificent a portion of the highest of human gifts, had unhappily some of those infirmities that darken and degrade our nature. Some sixty or seventy years before the *Edinburgh Review* was thought of, Pope had condensed in one couplet all that Mr. Macaulay has urged in so many pages upon this unhappy subject—

> If parts allure thee, think how Bacon shined,
> The wisest, brightest, meanest of mankind.

And, after all, I am more inclined to side with the Editor than with the *Reviewer*. If Mr. Montagu has too much reverence for Bacon, Macaulay has too little; and I greatly prefer the former's error to the latter's.

H.—As to Pope's well-known couplet, we must make as much allowance for a poet's love of point and antithesis as for an Editor's partiality.

A.—Bacon betrayed, in some actions of his life, that he wanted independence as a politician, integrity as a judge, and zeal and generosity as a friend; and yet, nowithstanding these unsightly blots, his brightness was by no means entirely obscured,—

> ————His form had not yet lost
> All her original brightness;

and it requires no great stretch of candour to admit that he was something better than the "meanest of mankind." He was deficient in spirit and firmness and was somewhat selfish. But he was neither envious nor malignant. There was something about his general character and habits, that seems to have secured him the respect and good will of all with whom he came in contact, even after his disgrace. "My conceit of his person," says Ben Johnson, "was never increased towards him by his place or honours, but I have and do reverence him for the greatness that was only proper to himself: in that he seemed to me ever by his works, one of the greatest men, and most worthy of admiration, that had been in many ages. In his adversity I ever prayed that God would give him strength; for greatness he could not want." Surely the man thus spoken of by such a judge of human nature as Ben Jonson, ought not to be stigmatised as "the meanest of mankind."

H.—Mr. Montagu's affection for his hero surpasses the love of woman. He would exclaim, in the words of Moore—

> I know not, I ask not, if guilt's in thy heart,
> I but know that I love thee, whatever thou art.

In fact he goes still further, in his blind but most amiable partiality, and will not acknowledge that guilt is guilt when it is connected with the man whom he admires. He begs us to judge of Bacon with a particular reference to the times in which he lived, which is a just and proper caution; and if he had fully admitted the Chancellor's reception of bribes, this reference to

the less punctilious integrity of our ancestors might have had its due effect; but he is not satisfied with a mere extenuation, and insists upon Bacon's entire innocence, in spite of his own ingenuous confession of his guilt. This point is very ably noticed by Macaulay. Allow me to read it to you, as a favorable specimen of his style,—

He (Mr. Montagu) assures us that Bacon was innocent, that he had the means of making a perfectly satisfactory defence, that when he plainly and ingenuously confessed that he was guilty of corruption, and when he afterwards solemnly affirmed that his confession was "his act, his hand, his heart," he was telling a great lie; and that he refrained from bringing forward proofs of his innocence, because he durst not disobey the King and the favorite, who, for their own selfish objects, pressed him to plead guilty.

Now, in the first place, there is not the smallest ground to believe that if James and Buckingham thought Bacon had a good defence, they would have prevented him from making it. What conceivable motive had they for doing so? Mr. Montagu perpetually repeats that it was their interest to sacrifice Bacon. But he overlooks an obvious distinction. It was their interest to sacrifice Bacon on the supposition of his guilt, but not on the supposition of his innocence. James was very properly unwilling to run the risk of protecting his Chancellor against the Parliament. But if the Chancellor had been able, by force of argument, to obtain an acquittance from the Parliament, we have no doubt that both the King and Villiers would have heartily rejoiced. They would have rejoiced, not merely on account of their friendship for Bacon, which seems, however, to have been as sincere as most friendships of that sort, but on selfish grounds nothing could have strengthened the Government more than such a victory. The King and the favorite abandoned the Chancellor, because they were unable to avert his disgrace, and unwilling to share it. Mr. Montagu mistakes effect for cause. He thinks that Bacon did not prove his innocence, because he was not supported by the Court. The truth evidently is, that the Court did not venture to support him, because he could not prove his innocence.

Again, it seems strange that Mr. Montagu should not perceive that while attempting to vindicate Bacon's reputation, he is really casting on it the foulest of all aspersions. He imputes to his idol a degree of meanness and depravity, more loathsome than judicial corruption itself. A corrupt judge may have many good qualities; but a man who, to please a powerful patron, solemnly declares himself guilty of corruption, when he knows himself to be innocent, must be a monster of servility and impudence. Bacon

was, to say nothing of his highest claims to respect, a gentleman, a nobleman, a scholar, a statesman, a man of the first consideration in society, a man far advanced in years. Is it possible to believe that such a man would, to gratify any human being, irreparably ruin his own character by his own act? Imagine a grey headed judge, full of years and honors, owning, with tears, with pathetic assurances of his penitence and of his sincerity, that he has been guilty of shameful mal-practices, repeatedly asseverating the truth of his confession, subscribing it with his own hand, submitting to conviction, receiving a humiliating sentence, and acknowledging its justice, and all this when he has it in his power to show that his conduct has been irreproachable! The thing is incredible. But if we admit it to be true, what must we think of such a man, if indeed he deserves the name of man, who thinks any thing that Kings and minions can bestow more precious than honor, or any thing that the King can inflict more terrible than infamy?"

A.—It has been objected to the Baconian philosophy, that it overrates the importance of those sciences which minister to the physical well-being of man, and that it underrates the importance of moral philosophy.

H.—Macaulay notices this objection, but goes himself even greatly beyond Lord Bacon in advocating the doctrine of utility, in the lowest sense of the word. Who would have expected this illustration of the doctrine of utility in its narrowest sense, this elevation of *physics* above *ethics*—of a shoe-maker above a Reviewer—from the old antagonist of the utilitarians—and from the very same pen that has been so often employed to turn them into ridicule? I deeply regret that Macaulay should lend his brilliant powers to the support of so dull a cause.

A.—I think you greatly overrate him.

H.—I think *you* greatly *underrate* him; even his least felicitous productions seem the work of no ordinary hand. They are always vigorous and lively. He never wearies us, though he sometimes dwells much longer upon his subject than the occasion requires. He seems to have studied English history with uncommon earnestness and success, and in his historical reviews betrays a peculiar pleasure in introducing elaborate portraits of celebrated persons, drawn with wonderful dexterity and precision.

A.—A consciousness of his skill in this mode of illustration

tempts him to use it to excess, or to thrust his pictures into places where they are out of keeping, or where at least they could be easily dispensed with. Much, for instance, of his elaborate historical illustration in the article on Bacon might have been very well omitted, without the slightest injury to the interest of the main subject; and in some of his other essays, the passion for portrait-painting has taken so strong a hold of him, that he leaps beyond the utmost limits of historical research, loses sight of beings of flesh and blood, and trusts almost wholly to his fancy and invention; reminding us strongly of a well known passage in Cowper's *Task*—

> Some write a narrative of wars and feats
> Of heroes little known; and call the rant
> A history: describe the man, of whom
> His own coevals took but little note,
> And paint his person, character, and views
> As they had known him from his mother's womb.
> They disentangle from the puzzled skein,
> In which obscurity has wrapped them up,
> The threads of politic and shrewd design,
> That ran through all his purposes, and charge
> His mind with meaning that he never had,
> Or, having, kept concealed.

H.—Nothing can be more true, animated, and striking, than Macaulay's best historical sketches.

A.—But when he affects a kind of confidential intimacy with men who have been quietly inurned for several centuries, and narrates the events of former ages with the minuteness and precision of an actual eye-witness, one cannot but feel that he is encroaching on the province of the novelist. In Godwin's Essay on Posthumous Fame, there are some acute remarks on the uncertainty of history, that I should like to recommend to the notice of Macaulay. Godwin maintains that history is a tissue of fables; that there is no reason to believe that any one page in history is extant which exhibits the unmixed truth; that human affairs are so entangled, human motives so subtle, and so variously compounded, that the exact truth can never be discovered.

He observes too that no man ever completely understood the character of any other, even of his most familiar friend. If this be true, how absurd a personage is a dogmatizing historian who pretends to a thorough knowledge of the characters and designs of the politicians of former ages! Of the difficulty of obtaining an accurate and certain knowledge of the most ordinary events, an old anecdote of Sir Walter Raleigh is so an excellent illustration, that it cannot be too often brought to the notice of any historical writer inclined to be rather too positive. When Sir Walter was writing his history of the world in the Tower of London, he heard a vehement contention beneath his window, but he could not see the combatants, or distinguish exactly what they said. He enquired of one person after another the nature of the disturbance, but their accounts were so contradictory that he despaired of arriving at the truth. Alas! said he, can I not make myself master of an incident that happened but an hour ago under my own window, and shall I imagine, that I can truly understand the history of Hannibal and Cæsar?

H.—Macaulay occasionally illustrates his arguments with images that are peculiarly vivid and poetical. They are perhaps not always new, but they are always pleasing and appropriate. There a passage in an article of his on Sir James Mackintosh's History of the Revolution in 1688 that is singularly beautiful. It describes the progress of national enlightenment. Here it is:

Faint glimpses of truth begin to appear, and shine more and more into the perfect day. The highest intellects, like the tops of mountains, are the first to catch and reflect the dawn. They are bright, while the level below is still in darkness. But soon the light, which at first illumined only the loftiest eminences, descends on the plain, and penetrates to the deepest valley.

A.—Macaulay has borrowed this illustration from himself. In his article on Dryden (in the *Edinburgh Review* of 1828,) he has the same image.

The sun illuminates the hill, while it is still below the horizon; and truth is discovered by the highest minds a little before it becomes manifest to the multitude. This is the extent of their superiority. They are the first

to catch and reflect a light, which, without their assistance, must, in a short time, be visible to those who lie far beneath them.

Macaulay's articles are easily recognized by any careful observer of the peculiarities of style. Though a great admirer of our elder writers, he indicates in his own practice, an absolute horror of the long sentences, the stately march, and difficult involutions of English prose in the time of Elizabeth and James. He has what is called an Anglo-Gallican taste for short, epigrammatic, and unconnected periods; a style which Coleridge says an ancient critic would have thought purposely invented for persons troubled with the asthma to read, and for those to comprehend who labour under the pitiable asthma of a short-witted intellect. The French, from whom it is borrowed, call it the style *coupé*, in opposition to the style *périodique*. Just hand me that volume of Dr. Channing's works. I must read you what he says of long sentences—

A full mind will naturally overflow in long sentences. I delight in long sentences in which a great truth, instead of being broken up into numerous periods, is spread out in its full proportions, is irradiated with a variety of illustration and imagery, is set forth in a splendid affluence of language, and flows, like a full stream, with a majestic harmony, which fills at once the ear and the soul.

A good style, however, consists not in the exclusive use of either long or short sentences, but in a judicious alternation of both. Macaulay gives us too many short ones of the same sound and character. Perspicuity is thus gained with little trouble; for in a sentence of a single line it is not difficult to avoid obscurity; and by its clearness and brevity the reader is saved all effort and fatigue. Short sentences are easy to write and easy to read. But in the too liberal employment of such sentences the writer is apt to become wordy, with a false appearance of conciseness, and the reader's memory at last fails him. He discovers that the impression upon his mind is vague and confused, owing to the absence of certain links of style, and a proper continuity of thought. The perspicuity, therefore, is in individual sentences, and not in the entire composition. Too many short periods

coming together have a snappish and flippant air, quite opposed to the dignity which should characterise the style of an historical writer, who wishes to be impressive. Listen to these specimens of Macaulay's brevities in his paper on Bacon. They seem like notes of an intended article, rather than the portions of a finished composition.

> He soon had a lesson which he never forgot. The favorite received the news of the Lord Keeper's interference, with feelings of the most violent resentment, and made the King even more angry than himself. Bacon's eyes were at once opened to his error, and to all its possible consequences. He had been elated, if not intoxicated, by greatness. The shock sobered him in an instant. He was all himself again. He apologized submissively for his interference. He directed the Attorney-General to stop proceedings against Coke. He sent to tell Lady Coke that he could do nothing for her. He announced to both the families that he was desirous to promote the connexion. Having given these proofs of contrition, he ventured to present himself before Buckingham.

Perhaps they ought to have been printed in this form, and have been entitled *Memoranda*—

> He had been elated, if not intoxicated, by greatness.
> The shock sobered him in an instant.
> He was all himself again.
> He apologised submissively for his interference.
> He directed the Attorney-General to stop proceedings against Coke.
> He sent to tell Lady Coke that he could do nothing for her.
> He announced to both the families that he was desirous to promote the connexion.

It is not often that we meet in the pages of any other writer so many laconic bits so closely clustered. They give an air of vivacity to the style, but at the expense of better qualities. Remarks in their nature serious, seem to want gravity and earnestness—

> Light quirks of music, broken and uneven,
> Make the soul dance upon a jig to heaven.

There is no solemnity of tone, no "linked sweetness long drawn out," in Macaulay's style; but his sharp, abrupt, and animated manner is admirably calculated for the smart paradoxes and

insolent sarcasms of which he is so inordinately fond. A writer less inclined to pour out his soul in praise, I never met with. He seems to curl his critical lip at all men. Individual authors, of whom all the rest of the world speak with reverence and affection, he treats with a degree of contempt which scarcely any thing bearing the shape of humanity can deserve. Is this an indication of profound wisdom; or a pitiful self-sufficiency?

> If thou be one whose heart the holy forms
> Of young imagination hath kept pure,
> Stranger! henceforth be warned; and know that pride,
> Howe'er disguised in its own majesty,
> Is bitterness; that he who feels contempt
> For any living thing, hath faculties,
> Which he has never used; that thought with him
> Is in its infancy. The man whose eye
> Is ever on himself, doth look on one,
> The least of Nature's works, one who might move
> The wise man to that scorn, which wisdom holds
> Unlawful ever. O be wiser thou!
> Instructed that true knowledge leads to love.
>
> *Wordsworth.*

I look upon Macaulay as a man of undoubted and indeed most brilliant talent; but it does not amount to genius. Genius reverences genius. It is rarely flippant, self-opinionated and contemptuous. It is eager to recognize the slightest indication of a congenial spirit, even in minds infinitely inferior to itself. The extreme of mere cleverness is, on the contrary, very frequently allied to self-idolatry and a supercilious disregard of others.

H.—Well—I quite differ from you. I am decidedly of opinion that Macaulay is a man of genius—and of very rare genius too. Nor do I think him upon the whole an unamiable writer. His arguments are generally close and logical and almost always on the side of truth and freedom, and the best interests of mankind.

A.—Would you compare him to Sydney Smith, who is said by the way, to have characterized him (with reference to his conversation,) as "*a book in breeches*"?

H.—Sydney Smith somewhat resembles Macaulay in the quickness and closeness of his logic and in mere lucidity of style. But the one is a wit and the other an eloquent orator and rhetorician. Macaulay has more poetry in his nature than Sydney Smith.

A.—Smith's wit is first-rate, and it is always employed in some noble cause. He was a truly wide-minded and generous man. He and Fonblanque (of the *Examiner*) have produced the liveliest and most logical political articles that have been published within the last twenty or thirty years. As it is time to bring this evening's chit-chat to an end, let us wind up with a pleasant paragraph from the pen of the witty parson—

BRITISH TAXATION.

We can inform Jonathan what are the inevitable consequences of being too fond of glory:—Taxes upon every article which enters the mouth, or covers the back, or is placed under foot—taxes upon every thing which it is pleasant to see, hear, feel, smell or taste,—taxes upon warmth, light and locomotion—taxes on every thing that comes from abroad, or is grown at home—taxes on the raw material—taxes on every fresh value that is added to it by the industry of man—taxes on the sauce which pampers man's appetite and the drug that restores him to health—on the ermine which decorates the Judge, and the rope which hangs the criminal—on the poor man's salt, and the rich man's spice—on the brass nails of the coffin, and the riband of the bride—at bed or board, couchant or levant, we must pay. The school-boy whips his taxed top, the beardless youth manages his taxed horse, with a taxed bridle, on a taxed road, and the dying Englishman, pouring his medicine, which has paid seven per cent, into a spoon which has paid fifteen per cent, flings himself back upon his chintz-bed which has paid twenty-two per cent, and expires in the arms of an apothecary, who has paid a license of a hundred pounds, for the privilege of putting him to death. His whole property is then immediately taxed from two to ten per cent. Besides the probate, large fees are demanded for burying him in the chancel; his virtues are handed down to posterity on taxed marble: and he is gathered to his fathers to be taxed no more.

No. XIX.

HUME AND GIBBON.

H.—I wish our friend N—— would cease to sport his scepticism in general society,—he cannot do society or himself the least good by it. Such conduct is at all events in the worst possible taste, to say the least of it.

L.—I have spoken to him about it repeatedly. He is one of the most amiable men in the world, and one of the most acute; but his ostentatious scepticism is his weak point, and he clings to it like a partial parent to a deformed child.

V.—For my part I like his frankness. If his opinions are not generally received, and he nevertheless thinks them favorable to the cause of truth, why should he not urge them on every fair occasion? I confess to hold very nearly the same opinions, but I have not the same moral courage as our friend N——, and, therefore, keep them to myself in mixed company; besides I am inclined to think that the expression of such opinions is not only injurious to the interests of the individual who is bold enough to avow them, but to society at large. Though a deist myself, I regard Deism, as, upon the whole, an unhappy faith, and unfit for the mass of mankind, who require the authority, and guidance, and consolation of a less abstract and ideal religion. N—— thinks otherwise, and is for letting out what he thinks the truth at all seasons and under all circumstances, satisfied that it is the safest course in the end.

L.—The other evening, in a company in which there were three clergymen, he sneeringly observed that he wondered that Mr. Jyngel, the travelling conjuror, had not been torn to pieces by the mob, for turning water into wine, for it was one of our Saviour's miracles. This was a gross insult to every Christian in the room, and really, I think. he deserved to be turned out of it. I fear it is not so much the love of truth as an uneasiness

at standing alone, or the vanity of proving that he is a deeper thinker than the mob, that makes our friend so ready to avow and defend his scepticism.

V.—It is not generous to attribute by mere guess-work unworthy motives to any man who takes a different path from our own, when his actions can possibly be accounted for in a favorable manner. You cannot *know* his motives, and they *may* be good. Give him, therefore, the benefit of a doubt; especially as the probability, founded on his general character, is decidedly in his favor.

H.—Speaking generally, (putting aside all reference to the individual case of N——,) those who reject Christianity are persons whose interest it is that there should be no future state. Their wish is father to their thought. A Christian cannot help forming an unfavorable opinion of the moral character of a sceptic, and nothing places this in a stronger light, than the repulsiveness of atheism or deism, when discovered in the female sex, to which we look for every thing that is good and graceful.

V.—It is too much the fashion amongst certain religionists to attack the motives of antagonists, whose arguments are rather troublesome to answer. Thus they tell us that Hume and Gibbon entertained so intense a hatred of truth, so passionate a love of falsehood, so demoniac a desire to injure the eternal interests of their fellow-creatures, even at the sacrifice of their own—so reckless a disregard of the anger of the Almighty—that they earnestly devoted all their energies to destroy a religion which they perfectly well *knew* to be the genuine word of God. I confess it is hard to keep one's temper when even good men meet all difference of opinion with such cruel misrepresentation as this. Fanatical religionists, not contented with attributing the most Satanic motives to all who do not believe as they do, have also the audacity to speak with contempt of all the intellects that have ever been opposed to them. Dr. Magee in his book *On Atonement and Sacrifice*, describes Hume's metaphysical works as "*standing memori-*

als of a heart as wicked and a head as weak as ever pretended to the character of philosopher or moralist," and the *Quarterly Review* (March 1844) quotes this judgment with approbation. And yet Adam Smith spoke of this man, with a *wicked heart and a weak head,* as " approaching as nearly to the idea of *a perfectly wise and virtuous man,* as the nature of human frailty will permit." Dugald Stewart observes, of Hume's *Treatise of Human Nature,* (a work planned at the age of one-and-twenty and composed before his twenty-fifth year) that it has contributed, either directly or indirectly, more than any single work, to the subsequent progress of the philosophy of the human mind; and the greatest German philosophers still continue to speak of Hume and his writings with profound respect. They wonder at the shallow and ungenerous attacks to which he has been subjected by his own countrymen. Never before did a *weak head* (which a man like Dr. Magee could so pity and despise) work such wonders! Never before did *weak head* and *wicked heart* excite that enthusiasm of friendship in the virtuous and the great which attended David Hume. Even the *Quarterly Reviewer* reluctantly acknowledges that he enjoyed " the cordial friendship of the most distinguished members of the Scottish Establishment—Blair, Wallace, Drysdale, Wishhart, Jardine, Home, Robertson, and Carlyle." He was beloved and admired by all who knew him. In Paris he was called *The Good David.* Who that has read Mackenzie's *La Roche* can fail to reverence and love the calm and benevolent sceptical Philosopher, whose character is so exquisitely pourtrayed in that beautiful and pathetic story?

H.—You pay us a very bad compliment if you imagine that L—— and myself are at all disposed to second the attacks of mere fanatics upon philosophers. We may deeply lament Hume's unhappy errors on the subject of religion, without hating the man, or undervaluing his intellectual powers.

V.—I was not thinking of " the present company," which, in discussions of this nature, are presumed, by the laws of good breeding, to be excepted from any general censure. But, though

I readily exonerate you both from any thing like a persecuting spirit, I cannot help smiling at the cool manner in which you take it for granted that, in attacking your own faith, the greatest of sceptical philosophers must *inevitably be wrong*, or, in other words, that your own decision as to which is the true religion is *absolutely infallible*.

L.—Your objection would go to overthrow all faith whatever —for what is faith, but an unfaltering conviction?

V.—If an unfaltering conviction, as you call it, and demonstrated truth were identical, the said unfaltering conviction would certainly justify you in speaking with perfect confidence of the errors of all philosophers who had arrived at a different conclusion from yourself. But I deny that there has ever existed a single human being whose conviction or faith in matters of religion could be justly pronounced *infallible*, notwithstanding the pretensions of his Holiness the Pope. If there were but one religion in the world, philosophers would be less surprized at people feeling certain of the impossibility of their being in the wrong, but when they look round upon the world, and perceive such a diversity of religions, each one opposed to all the rest, and each with exclusive claims to truth, and observe what thousands of powerful and sincere minds, under every religious banner, have been impressed with an equally strong conviction of the absolute truth of their own creed, and the certain falsehood of all others, it is a sad thing to behold any individual pluming himself upon his own infallibility, and exulting over the vast majority of mankind.

H.—You are combating the winds. We make no pretension to infallibility. But we cannot resist evidence, and the evidence in favor of the Christian religion is so overwhelming, that it is not in our power to withhold our assent. When God speaks can man dispute?

V,—But the question is—*does* God speak—you say *yes:* I say *no*—who is to decide?

H.—Men of more research and larger reach of understanding than either you or I can boast of, have settled this ques-

tion pretty clearly. You yourself acknowledge that Deism is "an unhappy creed," and unfit for the majority of mankind. You cannot say that of the Christian religion, for even, setting aside all consideration of its truth, no candid man, however inclined to scepticism respecting its claims to a divine origin, can deny that it has done more good to mankind, even in this world, than all other religions put together. Let us judge of the tree by its fruit. The consolation it affords to the wretched, and the support it gives to virtue, are qualities which no infidel of the least candor can pretend to question. Then, again, what can be more eggregiously unfair than to class (as sceptics are apt to do) so pure and beautiful a religion with all the miserable superstitions of savage nations? The sceptic may laugh at, or despise, the gods of the Greeks or the Hindus, but he cannot speak contemptuously of the character of Jesus Christ, which, even if it were to be regarded as a human conception only, must be allowed to surpass in purity and beauty every other representation of perfect excellence which human genius has as yet produced. To imagine that low, sordid, cunning devisers of fables could or would invent or pourtray so divine a character, and in such perfect keeping, is an extravagance bordering on idiotism or insanity.

V.—I coincide in opinion with so much of what you have said that I am indisposed to keep up the controversy, by dwelling upon a point or two on which I think that you are wrong. Were I desirous to protract the discussion, I should ask you if the Hindu and the Mahomedan did not, equally with the Christian, derive consolation in the hour of affliction, or on the approach of death, from the promises held out by their religion. Could no pious Hindu, at the last gasp, and with half his body in the "sacred river," exclaim, with perfect sincerity, "*See in what peace a Hindu can die?* We must not suppose, with the bigots, that all error in religion is voluntary, or that no man who professes a religion different from our own, can be quite sincere.

H.—You are doing the very thing that you say you are disinclined to do—you are lengthening the discussion, or, at least,

endeavoring to do so. But I will not be tempted to keep up a conversation which to me is becoming almost painful. If you think the weak delusions of superstition deserve for one moment to be put upon a level with a hope, soberly and humbly founded on that which some of the greatest of human intellects (Shakspeare, and Bacon, and Milton, and Newton, and Locke,) have acknowledged to be the word of the most High—if you think the opinion of an ignorant Brahmin (who is so little above a state of nature) is worthy to be compared with that of a Christian philosopher of the most enlightened age and nation—I can only say, that our minds must be so differently constituted that further discussion would probably only tend to widen the space between us.

V.—I most willingly drop the subject, and shall be glad to return to some literary topic, on which we shall have a better chance of meeting cordially on one common ground.

No. XX.

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR AGAIN.

H.—It is now some time since we met. Have you any literary gossip to communicate?

L.—None; never was the world more barren of matters of literary interest, though science is taking gigantic strides and making new discoveries daily.

H.—Science is always progressive—not so those arts and those branches of literature dependant rather on individual genius, than on that general knowledge which is inherited or acquired. Particular periods seem to prepare the world for certain scientific triumphs, and the man to make them is never wanting. The discovery of the manifold uses of steam was rather the discovery of an age than of an individual. Those who think otherwise have not yet agreed amongst themselves as to what individual or

to what country the honor is due. There is no reason to anticipate any check to the advance of science. I wish we could say the same of literature. But Homer and Shakspeare, by their gigantic powers, have dwarfed all their descendants. There is no prospect of their being surpassed or equalled in our time or at any future period. We boast of improvements in criticism and education; but we have discovered no means of turning lively or industrious students into great poets.

L.—It was Swift, I think, who said that there are only four or five men of genius born in an age. There were certainly more than that number in the age of Elizabeth.

H.—It is very singular that there should have been so many noble dramatic geniuses in that age, and none before or since. If there are no successful dramatists in this age, it is not because the drama has been neglected. There never was a greater number of play-wrights. Within these last eight or ten years even theatrical talent has become extinct. There is not a single great actor, comic or tragic, now living.

L.—You were asking me just now whether I had any literary gossip—I replied *none*—but I ought to have mentioned that, since we last met, I have seen Moxon's beautiful edition of the collected works of Walter Savage Landor.

H.—I also have not only seen but *read* the book—Have you?

L.—Yes, I have partly read it. It is sometimes dull enough for a few pages, but the author never lets you long forget that he is a man of genius and learning.

H.—If any man living deserves that character it is Landor. There is a fine spirit of poetry in his classical verse compositions, though they are sometimes a little stiff and obscure. They contain passages of exquisite beauty, but the general texture is by no means suited to the popular taste.* Had he confined himself to

* Southey had a very high opinion of Landor as a poet before he knew him personally. In a letter to Cottle he says,—" There is a poem called *Gebir*, of which I know not whether my review of it in the *Critical* be yet printed, but in that review you will find some of the most exquisite poetry in the language. The poem is such as Gilbert, if he were only half as

verse, his name would hardly have survived his natural life; but his *Imaginary Conversations* the world will not willingly let die. They are characterised by true eloquence and true wisdom.

L.—Generally—not always. His opinions are sometimes extravagant enough, and there is a tone of personal feeling in his allusions to some of his brother authors that shows he is not always capable of a calm and unbiassed judgment. He is a man of strong passions and obstinate prejudices, and when his feelings are roused he does not weigh his words.

H.—I like him all the better for speaking thus directly from the heart, for this practice gives an earnestness to his style which distinguishes him from the herd of authors, who make literature a sort of masquerade.

L.—But he is not a trustworthy guide. His heat and precipitance and partiality make one always disposed to regard him with suspicion. If it were not for these faults, his learning and sagacity and fine taste, would render him an authority on all questions of literary criticism.

H.—There is *substance* in all he writes, and to me, therefore, he is always interesting, even when I may differ from him. He is a thinker, and he has not original thoughts only but strong feelings. His prose is poetical, without being ostentatiously so; and, without passing the limits assigned by a just taste, he generally displays a greater abundance of imagery in his prose, than is to be met with in many an ordinary poem. His illustrations are not merely ornamental, but singularly apt and striking, and often throw into strong light, as with a single flash, a long train of profound reasoning.

L.—Do you think he has treated Wordsworth fairly?

H.—Most certainly. He has startled the servile herd of critics by taking a path of his own. Wordsworth is now as much *over*-rated as he was formerly *under*-rated. In both cases there was the same slavish and cuckoo spirit in the mob of critics. It is impossible

mad as he is, could have written. I would go a hundred miles to see the (anonymous) author."—*Cottle's Reminiscences of Coleridge and Southey.*

to open a review now without anticipating what will be said upon any individual author. Few critics of the present day seem to think for themselves, and therefore, the honest and independent opinions of a writer like Landor are peculiarly valuable. I was gratified with Bulwer's tribute to his powers. I only fell in with it a few days ago. "Amongst the most remarkable men of the day," says Bulwer, "in command of language—in scholastic copiousness of learning—in deep and laborious thought—in elevation of sentiment—I would place Walter Savage Landor." In a very beautiful and just review, in the *Examiner*, of Landor's *Citation and Examination of William Shakspeare*, Fonblanque, (for I suppose he is the critic) observes that the book "is an honor to its author, it does honor to English literature; it is an addition to the rare list of books that will live."

L.—And yet how little the work is known! What a pity it is that Landor is unable or unwilling to popularize his genius. I cannot help acknowledging the great power, of some sort or other, which is evident in all those of his works that I have read; but yet I gladly lay them down with a sense of weariness, and not always with a very clear conception of the author's purpose. This is the result of a perusal of his prose—his poetry is still more wearisome and obscure. "What is it," said Coleridge, "that Landor wants to make him a poet? His powers are certainly very considerable, but he seems to be deficient in that modifying faculty which compresses several parts into one whole..... He has never learned, with all his energy, how to write simple and lucid English."

H.—I venture to differ both from Coleridge and you. I think Landor writes true poetry and lucid prose. To quote his own beautiful line, he proves himself, in the poetry of his happiest moods, to be one of the

Serene creators of immortal things.

As to "popularizing" his genius, I know that he never formed a wish that way. He has somewhere said—"Give me ten accomplished men for readers, and I am content." This wish was

obtained as soon as he began to write. The first men of the times are amongst his enthusiastic admirers. Have you read his *Pentameron?*

L.—No.

H.—It is a series of imaginary dialogues between Petrarch and Boccacio. It is full of wisdom, of eloquence, of pathos, and most subtile criticism. I will open the book at random, and read here and there a few passages to you—

Middling men, favoured in their life time by circumstances, often appear of higher stature than belongs to them; great men always of lower. Time, the sovereign, invests with befitting raiment, and distinguishes with proper ensigns, the familiars he has received into his eternal habitations: in these alone are they deposited: you must wait for them.

No advice is less necessary to you, than the advice to *express your meaning as clearly as you can.* Where the purpose of glass is to be seen through, we do not want it tinted nor wavy. In certain kinds of poetry the case may be slightly different: such, for instance, as are intended to display the powers of association and combination in the writer, and to invite and exercise the compass and comprehension of the intelligent. Pindar and the Attic tragedians wrote in this manner, and rendered the minds of their audience more alert and ready and capacious. They found some fit for them, and made others. Great painters have always the same task to perform. What is excellent in their art, cannot be thought excellent by many, even of those who reason well on ordinary matters, and see clearly beauties elsewhere. All correct perceptions are the effect of careful practice. We litttle doubt that a mirror would direct us in the most familiar of our features, and that our hand would follow its guidance, until we try to cut a lock of our hair. We have no such criterion to demonstrate our liability to error in judging of poetry; a quality so rare that perhaps no five contemporaries ever were masters of it.

We admire by tradition; we censure by caprice; and there is nothing in which we are more ingenious and inventive. A wrong step in politics sprains a foot in poetry; eloquence is never so unwelcome as when it issues from a familiar voice; and praise hath no echo but from a certain distance. Our critics, who know little about them, would gaze with wonder at any thing similar, in our days, to Pindar and Sophocles, and would cast it aside as quite impracticable.

The great poet, like the original man of the Platonists, is double, possessing the further advantage of being able to drop one half at his option,

and to resume it. Some of the tenderest on paper have no sympathies beyond; and some of the austerest in their intercourse with their fellow-creatures, have deluged the world with tears. It is not from the rose that the bee gathers her honey, but often from the most acrid and the most bitter leaves and petals.

Petrarca.—The sunshine of poetry makes the colour of blood less horrible, and draws up a shadowy and a softening haziness where the scene would otherwise be too distinct. Poems, like rivers, convey to their destination what must without their appliances be left unhandled, these to ports and arsenals, this to the human heart.

Boccaccio.—So it is, and what is terror in poetry, is horror in prose. We may be brought too close to an object to leave any room for pleasure. Ugolino affects us like a skeleton, by dry bony verity.

Petrarca.—We cannot be too distinct in our images; but although distinctness, on this and most other occasions, is desirable in the imitative arts, yet sometimes in painting, and sometimes in poetry, an object should not be quite precise. In your novel of *Andrevola and Gabriotto*, you afford me an illustration—

Le pareva dal corpo di lui uscire una cosa oscura e terribile.

This is like a dream: this *is* a dream. Afterward, you present to us such palpable forms and pleasing colours as may relieve and sooth us—

Ed avendo molte rose, bianche e vermiglie, colte, perciocche la stagione era.

Boccaccio.—Surely you now are mocking me. The roses, I perceive, would not have been there, had it not been the season.

Petrarca.—A poet often does more and better than he is aware at the time, and seems at last to know as little about it as a silk worm knows about the fineness of her thread.

Boccaccio.—To be useful to as many as possible is the especial duty of a critic, and his utility can only be attained by rectitude and precision. He walks in a garden which is not his own; and he neither must gather the blossoms to embellish his discourse, nor break the branches to display his strength. Rather let him show what is out of order, and help to raise what is lying on the ground.

Petrarca.—Auditors, and readers in general, come to hear or read, not your opinion delivered, but their own repeated. Fresh notions are as disagreeable to some as fresh air to others, and this inability to bear them is equally a symptom of disease.

Petrarca.—Of what value are all the honours we can expect, from the wisest

of our species, when even the wisest hold us lighter in estimation than those who labour to destroy what God delighted to create, came on earth to ransom, and suffered on the cross to save! Glory then, glory can it be, to devise with long study, and to execute with vast exertions, what the fang of a reptile or the leaf of a weed accomplishes in an hour? Shall any one tell me, that the numbers sent to death or to wretchedness make the difference, and constitute the great? Away then from the face of nature as we see her daily! away from the interminable varieties of animated creatures! away from what is fixed to the earth and lives by the sun and dew! brute inert matter does it: behold it in the pestilence, in the earthquake, in the conflagration, in the deluge!

Boccaccio.—The nightingale is a lively bird to the young and joyous, a melancholy one to the declining and pensive. He has notes for every ear, he has feelings for every bosom; and he exercises over gentle souls a wider and more welcome dominion than any other creature. If I must not offer you my thanks, for bringing to me such associations as the bed-side of sickness is rarely in readiness to supply; if I must not declare to you how pleasant and well placed are your reflections on our condition; I may venture to remark on the nightingale, that our Italy is the only country where this bird is killed for the market. In no other is the race of Avarice and Gluttony so hard run. What a triumph for a Florentine, to hold under his fork the most delightful being in all animated nature! the being to which every poet, or nearly every one, dedicates the first fruits of his labours. A cannibal who devours his enemy, through intolerable hunger, or, what he holds as the measure of justice and of righteousness, revenge, may be viewed with less abhorrence than the heartless gormandizer, who casts upon his loaded stomach the little breast that has poured delight on thousands.

L.—I must confess that there is no want of transparency in these specimens of Landor's prose; but perhaps they are better than any I had read before.

H.—The *Imaginary Conversations* abound in the most exquisite examples of eloquent, energetic, and lucid writing.* You

* Of the difference between the partialities of the public, and the eventual judgments of the people; between a deeply-founded fame and an ephemeral interest, few more striking examples will perhaps be discovered in future years than in the solitary career of Walter Savage Landor amidst the various "lights of his day." He has incontestibly displayed original genius as a writer; the highest critical faculty, that sympathy with genius

were pleased with an autograph letter of Landor's that I read to you some time ago. Here are two notes which I may as well show you because they are autobiographical. The first was addressed, I think, to Mr. Horne, (a writer of fine genius,) but I have mislaid the envelope and cannot speak with certainty—

MY DEAR SIR,

When I wrote to you last, I thought it would be hardly worth your notice to say more of myself than my old schoolfellows, &c. had related. But I forget whether it is mentioned or known that the first verses I ever wrote in English, were on my cousin Mrs. Shuckburgh's marriage. I was then about fourteen. Two years afterward, I translated into English the Jepthah of Buchanan, which I found I could not improve, even when I had written *Gebir*. I have kept neither. When I left Rugby and went under a Jesuit tutor, I translated into Latin Sapphics and Alcaics, many of Cowley's odes and other light poetry, correcting his fooleries and conceits —for I had just then been reading Sophocles and Pindar. At Oxford, we had Justin to construe. I was indignant at the choice of the author, but finding the story of the Phocæans, I began to turn it into poetry. This was my first attempt at blank verse. I was in my eighteenth year, and the French gad-fly had bitten me. Alfieri's wise question had not reached my ear—" Do you ever expect any good from France ?"

Believe me, my dear Sir,
Ever sincerely yours,
W. S. LANDOR.

MY DEAR SIR,

Some time ago I wrote to Moxon, the publisher, for a copy of my poems. He had not one. To lose no time, I send you (directed to Thomas of Catherine-street) all my writings I happen to possess. The best of them, I mean of the poetical, Giovanna of Naples, and the sequel tragedy are wanting. These never were offered to the stage. Mr. Horne requested me to supply him with some materials for his *New Spirit of the Age*—I sent them to him, and, at his request, permitted him to retain them after his work had appeared. I will enclose you a note, on reading which he will transmit them to you. I was born on the 30th of January, 1775. The rest is reported by Burke in his Commoners. There will be edited a

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and knowledge, which can only result from imagination, and a generous love of truth—and also a fine scholarship in the spirit as well as in the letter of classical attainments.—*New Spirit of the Age*.

new and complete edition of my works about November.* But this, for the present, my friend the Editor would keep secret: so say nothing about it. I directed my thanks to you on receiving your admirable book, which I shall read again, and perhaps with increased pleasure.

Believe me, my dear Sir,
Most sincerely yours,
W. S. LANDOR.

To D. L. Richardson,
Greenfield House, Jersey,

L.—These notes are interesting. What a strange, rough, dashing hand-writing! I am afraid I must rather abruptly take my departure, and bring our discussion to an end. I am obliged to hurry away to an engagement.

H.—Before you say good night, let me just read you two anecdotes about Landor from Horne's biographical notices of him, and then we will have done with the subject for the present—

Walter Landor, when a Rugby boy, was famous, among other feats of strength and skill, for the wonderful precision with which he used a cast net; and he was not often disposed to ask permission of the owners of those ponds or streams that suited his morning's fancy. One day a farmer suddenly came down upon him, and ordered him to desist, and give up his net. Whereupon Landor instantly cast his net over the farmer's head; caught him; entangled him; overthrew him; and when he was exhausted, addressed the enraged and discomfited face beneath the meshes, till the farmer promised to behave discreetly.

Mr. Landor went to Paris in the beginning of this century, where he witnessed the ceremony of Napoleon being made consul for life amidst the acclamations of multitudes. He subsequently saw the dethroned emperor pass through Tours, on his way to embark, as he intended, for America. Napoleon was attended only by a single servant, and descended at the Prefecture, unrecognized by any body, excepting Landor. The people of Tours were most hostile to Napoleon; Landor had always felt a hatred towards him, and now he had but to point one finger at him, and it would have done what all the Artillery of 20 years of war had failed to do. The people would have torn him to pieces. Need it be said that Landor was too "good a hater" and too noble a man, to avail himself of such an opportunity. He held his breath and let the hero pass.

* Moxon's beautiful edition, in two volumes, royal octavo.

No. XXI.

POPE—DRYDEN—ADDISON—JOHNSON—CHURCHILL WARTON.

F.—Pope opens his second book of the *Dunciad* with a passage in which there is considerable variety in the cæsural pauses. Though his first line is from Milton, he seems, in the remaining lines, to have had the music of Dryden in his ear—

> High on a gorgeous seat,—that far outshone
> Henley's gilt tub,—or Fleckno's Irish throne,
> Or that where on her Curls—the Public pours,
> All-bounteous,—fragrant grains and golden showers,
> Great Cibber sate :—the pround Parnassian sneer,
> The conscious simper—and the jealous leer,
> Mix in his look :—all eyes direct their rays
> On him,—and crowds turn coxcombs as they gaze.

Joseph Warton, in his edition of Pope, expresses a wish that his author had more frequently indulged in this sort of freedom of versification. I have a great partiality and respect for both the Wartons, but particularly for Thomas, who is much the best poet of the two. They were both of them, as critics on poetry, considerably in advance of their age. Thomas Warton's *Essay on Pope,* though much opposed on its first appearance, was not long after very generally acknowledged to present a correct view of the superiority of the natural over the artificial in poetry. And now this work, which was once unjustly censured as presumptious and paradoxical, is as unjustly neglected, as tame and common-place. I am so much pleased with an affectionate tribute to Thomas Warton, in the autobiography of Sir Egerton Brydges, that I am unable to resist the temptation to read it to you—

There are few characters on which I look with so much complacent in-

terest as Warton's. His temper was so sunshiny and benevolent; his manners were so simple; his erudition was so classical and various, his learning was so illuminated by fancy, his love of the country was so unaffected, his images are so picturesque; his knowledge of feudal and chivalrous manners was so minute, curious and lively, his absence of all worldly ambition and show was so attractive, his humour was so good-natured and innocent; his unaffected love of literature was so encouraging and exemplary, that I gaze upon his memory with untired satisfaction.

D.—This is a very true and beautiful summary of Warton's character. One of these days I should like to go over Warton's poetry again, for it is spirited and picturesque;—but for the present let us return to the little Nightingale of Twickenham. One of Pope's letters (to Walsh) on the subject of versification, exhibits a maturity of judgment quite extraordinary, considering that when he wrote it he was not out of his teens. But Pope, as was said of Gray, was never a boy. Spence, I think, records that he was never known to laugh. One is surprized to find Pope's after practice so little in accordance with his early theory. In the letter just mentioned, he observes, that, to preserve exact harmony and variety, the pause at the fourth and sixth syllable should never be continued above three lines together, as it would be apt to weary the ear with one continued tone—"at least it does mine," he adds. Who would have expected, after a criticism that might have graced the lips of Dryden, such see-saw verses as these?

> All are but parts—of one stupendous whole,
> Whose body Nature is—and God the soul;
> That changed through all—and yet in all the same,
> Great in the earth—as in the etherial frame;
> Warms in the sun—refreshes in the breeze,
> Glows in the stars—and blossoms in the trees:
> Lives through all life—extends through all extent,
> Spreads undivided—operates unspent.

It is easy to multiply illustrations of this defect. The fourth syllable is his favorite cæsural pause. He is partial also to the practise of commencing his iambic lines with a trochee, as in the four last lines just read, and it certainly gives spirit, variety

and animation to the music, if not too frequently repeated —but Pope was apt to fall into the error of those writers so pleasantly ridiculed in Sheridan's *Critic*, who never think they can give enough of a good thing—"*What! three morning guns!*" Here are some very noble and energetic lines, but if the modulation had been a little more varied, they would have been more agreeable to the ear,

> What! arm'd for virtue—when I point the pen,
> Brand the bold front—of shameless guilty men;
> Dash the proud game—ster in his gilded car;
> Bare the mean heart—that lurks beneath a *star*;
> Can there be wanting—to defend her cause,
> Lights of the church—or guardians of her laws?

It is said that the couplet which pleased Pope's ear most was

> Lo, where Mæotis sleeps, and hardly flows
> The freezing Tanais through a waste of snows.

It is varied and flowing, but has nothing peculiarly delightful in it to my ear. Warton notices a couplet in Pope's *Sappho to Phaon*, which he says has been quoted as the most mellifluous in our language—

> Ye gentle gales, beneath my body blow,
> And softly lay me on the waves below.

Beneath my body blow is awkward and inelegant, nor are the alliterative *bs* at all agreeable. Indeed the lines are altogether very school-boyish. Compare them with some lines of Milton.

> He must not float upon his watery bier
> Unwept, and welter to the parching wind,
> Without the meed of some melodious tear.

Here the alliterations are not unpleasing. Or, take another specimen—

> Fountains, and ye that warble, as ye flow,
> Melodious murmurs, warbling tune his praise.

F.—Though Pope in practise overlooked the charm of variety of modulation, notwithstanding his respect for the example of

his master, no writer was ever more happy in his exercise of the art of self-criticism, in the pruning and condensation of his first thoughts, and in strengthening and elevating his diction. He rarely altered a line or an expression without decidedly improving it—a strong proof of the accuracy of his judgment. When he wrote these lines, in the *Imitations of Horace,* he must have been very conscious how well they were illustrated by his own practise.

> O how severely with themselves proceed
> The men who write such verse as we can read,
> Their own strict judges, not a word they spare,
> That wants or force, or light, or weight, or care.
>
> *Imitations of Horace.*
>
> Prune the luxuriant, the uncouth refine,
> But show no mercy to an empty line.
>
> *The same.*

Observe the use which Pope made of the lines originally communicated in an imperfect state in a letter to Aaron Hill.

> While every joy, successful youth! is thine
> Be no unpleasing melancholy mine;
> Me long, ah long! may these soft cares engage,
> To rock the cradle of reposing age,
> With lenient arts prolong a parent's breath,
> Make langour smile, and smooth the bed of death:
> Me, when the cares my better years have shown
> Another's age shall hasten on my own,
> Shall some kind hands, like Bassa's or like thine,
> Lead gently downward, favor the decline?
> In want, in sickness, shall a friend be nigh,
> Explore my thought, and watch my asking eye?
> Whether that blessing be denied or given
> Thus far is right; the rest belongs to Heaven.

Compare this with the passage in his carefully finished Prologue to the satires (addressed to Dr. Arbuthnot), and notice with what exquisite judgment he has thrown away all the feeble words and lines, preserved what was worth preserving, and worked up the whole.

P—O friend! may each domestic bliss be thine!
Be no unpleasing melancholy mine:
Me, let the tender office long engage,
To rock the cradle of reposing age.
With lenient arts extend a mother's *breath,*
Make langour smile, and smooth the bed of death,
Explore the thought, explain *the asking eye,*
And keep awhile one parent from the sky!
On cares like these, if length of days attend,
May heaven, to bless those days, preserve my friend,
Preserve him social, cheerful and serene,
And just as rich as when he served a queen.
A—Whether that blessing be denied or given
Thus far was right, the rest belongs to Heaven.

D.—There is, perhaps, something a little awkward or obscure in the last couplet, placed as it is in the mouth of Arbuthnot. What blessing does the Doctor speak of? It is hardly graceful or modest in him to speak of his own friendship to the poet as *a blessing*, and yet that seems to be the meaning.

F.—This is an instance of the hazard attending after-patchings and alterations, even in the hands of the most careful and most judicious of self-critics. The meaning in the original draught is clear and apposite enough, but in altering one part of the passage the poet overlooked the context. It was a mere oversight—not an error of judgment. Had it caught his eye, he would infallibly have improved it. Perhaps it would read better and more consistently if the whole passage were given to Pope. The incongruity may be attributed to his having inadvertently affixed Arbuthnot's initial to the closing couplet.

D.—Pope's verses are always exquisite when he indulges himself in the expression of his natural tenderness. He was undoubtedly of a most affectionate disposition. His egotism is delightful. But never was poet more unfortunate in his editors. Neither Warton nor Bowles was particularly friendly to him, and Warburton and Roscoe have injured him, by an indiscreet attempt to elevate him as a writer above his real station. Pope was a true Poet, but he was neither a Milton nor a Shaks-

peare. There is something perhaps petty and too purely spiteful and personal in many of his satires and lampoons; but his compliments are turned with matchless elegance and ingenuity. They come upon us with a double charm, in the midst of harsh exposures of the faults and follies of the majority of mankind.

F.—And we must remember, too, that they had the rare merit of the most perfect honesty. Alderman Barber, it is said, gave the poet to understand that he would leave him a legacy of some thousands for a little commendation; but no man could more thorougly scorn a bribe than Alexander Pope. He was an independent writer, at a period when men did not blush to receive money for a dedication. As Johnson, I think, observes, he passed over Princes and Lords and Dukes and dedicated his Homer to Congreve.

D.—Let us endeavour to recollect a few of those noble compliments, for which, as Hazlitt said, a man would be almost ready to die.

COBHAM.

And you, brave Cobham! to the latest breath,
Shall feel your ruling passion strong in death;
Such in these moments, as in all the past,
"Oh save my country, Heaven!" shall be your last.

BOLINGBROKE AND THE EARL OF PETERBOROUGH.

There St. John mingles with my friendly bowl
The feast of reason and the flow of soul;
And he* whose lightning pierced the Iberian lines
Now forms my quincunx, and now ranks my vines,
Or tames the genius of the stubborn plain
Almost as quickly as he conquered Spain.

MURRAY, (EARL OF MANSFIELD.)

And what is fame? the meanest have their day,
The greatest can but blaze and pass away.

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* Pope tells us that Charles Mordaunt, Earl of Peterborough, conquered Valentia with only 280 horse and 900 foot.

Graced as thou art with all the power of words,
So known, so honored, in the House of Lords;
Conspicuous scene! another yet is nigh,
(More silent far) where kings and poets lie;
Where Murray, long enough his country's pride,
Shall be no more than Tully or than Hyde.

F.—The concluding couplet of your last specimen is very beautifully turned, but the second is the poorest in all Pope. It reminds me, by its prosaic and colloquial familiarity, of some verses of Fitzgerald, and the parody of him, by one of the authors of the *Rejected Addresses.* I can remember but one line (and that, I think, is from the parody)—

God bless the Regent and the Duke of York!

D.—I agree with you—the couplet is, indeed, a poor one. It seems hardly serious,—one

Wonders how devil it got there.

But now for a few more real gems:—

ALLEN.

Let humble Allen, with an awkward shame,
Do good by stealth, and blush to find it fame.

BERKELEY.

E'en in a Bishop I can spy desert,
Secker is decent, Rundel has a heart;
Manners with candor are to Benson given:
To Berkeley every virtue under heaven.

THE EARL OF SCARBOROUGH.

When I confess there 's one who feels for fame,
And melts to goodness, need I Scarborough name?

THE POET'S FRIENDS.

But does the court a worthy man remove,
That instant I declare he has my love;
I shun his zenith, court his mild decline—
Thus Somers once, and Halifax were mine.*

* An inelegant repetition will sometimes escape the notice of the most tasteful and accurate writers—the use of the word *court* twice within the space of three lines—though not with the same meaning—is certainly objectionable.

Oft in the still clear mirror of retreat
I studied Shrewsbury, the wise and great;
Carleton's calm sense, and Stanhope's noble flame,
Compared and found their generous aim the same;
How pleasing Atterbury's softer hour,
How shined the soul unconquer'd in the Tower!
How can I Pulteney, Chesterfield forget,
While Roman spirit charms or Attic wit?
Argyll, the State's whole thunder born to wield,
And shake alike the Senate and the field;
Or Wyndham, just to freedom and the throne,
The master of our passions and his own?
Names which I long have loved, nor loved in vain,
Ranked with their friends, not numbered with their train
And if yet higher the proud list should end
Still let me say no flatterer but a friend.

LORD BOLINGBROKE.

Why rail they, then, if but a wreath of mine
Oh, all-accomplished St. John, deck thy shrine?

Oh! while along the stream of time thy name
Expanded flies and gathers all its fame,
Say, shall my little bark attendant sail,
Pursue the triumph and partake the gale?
When statesmen, heroes, kings, in dust repose
Whose sons shall blush their fathers were thy foes,
Shall then this verse to future age pretend—
Thou wert my guide, philosopher, and friend?

LORD CORNBURY.

Would you be blest? despise low joys, low gains;
Disdain whatever Cornbury disdains;
Be happy, and be virtuous for your pains.

Warton has a note on this passage, in which he tells us that when Lord Cornbury returned from his travels, the late Earl of Essex informed him he had obtained a handsome pension for him. "How could you tell, my Lord," said Cornbury, indignantly, "that I was to be sold?" "Pope's compliments," said Hazlitt, "are equal in value to a house or an estate." "One would think," he adds, in reference to the tribute to Lord Cornbury,

"that a descendant of this nobleman could hardly be guilty of a mean or paltry action."

D.—I wish Addison had been as careful a condenser of his thoughts in verse as Pope was. How exquisitely harmonious and energetic is Pope's fine prologue to the cold and declamatory *Cato!* Addison was a far inferior poet, even to Dr. Johnson, whose first couplet of the *Vanity of Human Wishes* has been so much ridiculed by recent critics for its vague tautology—

> Let observation with extensive view,
> Survey mankind, from China to Peru.

The first line is needless; as the couplet stands, the author makes himself say, (as Coleridge, I think, has explained) "Let observation, with extensive observation, observe mankind."

F.—It reminds me of a sentence I met lately in Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments,* in which he speaks of one "whose talents *astonish* us with *wonder and surprize.*"

H.—How different is Johnson's couplet from the easy and unhesitating vigour of Dryden's—

> Look round the habitable world, how few
> Know their own good, or, knowing it, pursue.

But there is far more of feeble amplification and filling up of vacant spaces with mere words, in Addison than in Johnson. Look at the opening of *Cato*—

> The dawn is overcast, the morning lours,
> And heavily in clouds brings on the day—
> The great, the important day,
> Big with the fate of Cato and of Rome.

Another writer would have compressed these four lines into two—

> Now heavily in clouds comes on the day,
> Big with the fate of Cato and of Rome.

Take a specimen of the same weak verbosity in the celebrated soliloquy—

> The soul, secured in her existence, smiles
> At the drawn dagger, [*and defies its point,*]

> The stars shall fade away, the sun himself
> Grow dim with age, [*and Nature sink in years,*]
> But thou shalt flourish in immortal youth,
> Unhurt amid [*the war of elements,*
> *The wreck of matter, and*] the crush of worlds.
> What means this heaviness that hangs upon me?
> [*This lethargy that creeps through all my senses?*]
> Nature opprest, [*and harassed out with care*]
> Sinks down to rest.

F.—Johnson's *Irene* is just as bad a poem as *Cato*—perhaps worse. His blank verse is even more monotonous than Addison's, though rather less feeble.

> And passion sleeps, while declamation roars.

It is strange that even Johnson could reconcile his ear to his own versification—

> His mien is lofty, his demeanour great;
> Nor sprightly folly wantons in his air,
> Nor dull serenity becalms his eyes
> Such had I trusted once as soon as seen,
> But cautious age suspects the flattering form
> And only credits what experience tells.
> Has silence pressed her seal upon his lips?
> Does adamantine faith invest her heart?
> Will he not bend beneath a tyrant's frown?
> Will he not melt before ambitious fire?
> Will he not soften in a friend's embrace?
> Or flow dissolving in a woman's tears?

This is not dramatic blank-verse, nor indeed decent blank-verse of any kind. It is not even good sense. The last line in particular is abominable stuff. The whole passage reads as if the poet had forgotten to *tag rhymes* to it.

D.—Dr. Johnson's heroic rhymes are generally forcible and striking, though deficient in variety of tone, and in high imagination; but perhaps no man of acknowledged taste and ability ever wrote such detestable verses as Addison. A boy at school would deserve to be beaten for much better ones. Perhaps the worst poem in the largest collection of poetry extant (*Chalmers'*

English Poets, in twenty-one volumes royal octavo) is Addison's *Account of the Greatest English Poets;* in which he tells us that Spenser, the poet's poet, amused a barbarous age,—but

> Can charm an *understanding* age no more.

After mentioning Milton's poetical productions, he says

> His other works might have deserved applause,
> But now the language *can't* support the cause.

He makes no allusion to Shakspeare—he is not in the list of the Greatest English Poets!—but when he has yawningly expressed his weariness, after going through his laudations of other bards, he elegantly exclaims

> I'm tired of rhyming, and would fain give o'er,

But justice, he says, demands one "labour more"—he had almost forgotten one of the Greatest English Poets—

> The noble Montague remains unnamed.

After the mention of this vast genius, that "justice demands" should be remembered, when Shakspeare is forgotten, and, to the reader's extreme relief, the critical versifier brings his wretched doggrel to an end, but with an expression of modesty that is by no means out of place—

> *I've done at length;* and now, dear friend, receive
> The last poor present that my Muse can give.
> I leave the arts of poetry and *verse*
> To those that practise them with more *success.*

F.—We must recollect that these lines were published in the writer's youth.

D.—He was twenty-two years of age when he published them. They were written at a period of life when a poet's fancy is freshest—his passions warmest. Recollect what Pope and Cowley did in their teens. Besides, look at his later poems—they are a little more polished, indeed, but not a whit more poetical. Turn to his *Letter from Italy,* in which he *bridles in* his struggling

Muse with pain. To bridle a goddess is no very delicate idea, as Johnson observes; but in the next line Addison turns the goddess into a ship—

That longs to *launch* into a nobler strain,

"An act," adds Johnson, "which was never hindered by a bridle." Turn to the *Campaign*—that "gazette in rhyme"—and what can be fairly said of even the vaunted simile of the Angel, if simile it may be called. "If I had set ten school-boys," said Dr. Madden, "to write on the battle of Blenheim, and eight had brought me the angel, I should not have been surprized." Macaulay thinks the extraordinary popularity of this simile is chiefly to be attributed to the allusion to an actual and most terrific storm—

Such as of late o'er pale Britannia past;

And he regards it as a proof of the advantage which in rhetoric and poetry, the particular has over the general.*

And pleased the Almighty's *orders to perform*

Is a line quite in the style of Addison's earliest poems. When he writes prose he is a magician. But when he attempts the "golden cadences of verse" he becomes a very ordinary personage.

F.—I think you do him injustice. Even in his *Account of the Greatest English Poets* there is a very fair description of

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* The great tempest of November, 1703, the only tempest which in our latitude has equalled the rage of a tropical hurricane, had left a dreadful recollection on the minds of all men. No other tempest was ever in this country the occasion of a Parliamentary address or a public fast. Whole fleets had been cast away. Large mansions had been blown down. One prelate had been buried beneath the ruins of his palace. London and Bristol had presented the appearance of cities just sacked. Hundreds of families were still in mourning. The prostrate trunks of large trees, and the ruins of houses, still attested, in all the Southern counties, the fury of the blast.—*Edinburgh Review.*

Milton's poetry, written at a time when *Paradise Lost* was little appreciated or understood. There is a line in it upon the subject of that mighty poet's conception of the Garden of Eden, which I still remember, though I read the poem many long years ago—

> What tongue, what words of rapture can express
> *A vision so profuse of pleasantness?*

There is some spirit and ingenuity in his *Lines to Sir Godfrey Kneller*—some grace and melody in his ode commencing

> The spacious firmament on high
> And all the blue etherial sky,

And in the Hymn in which this stanza occurs—

> *For though in dreadful whirls we hung,*
> *High on the broken wave,*
> I knew thou wert not slow to hear,
> Nor impotent to save—

A stanza which delighted the early taste of Burns.

D.—Though I can never allow that Addison was a poet in verse, he was unquestionably a poetical writer in prose. How exquisite is his *Vision of Mirza!* Listen to the music of some passages that haunt one like fragments of verse—

> I fell into a profound contemplation on the vanity of human life; and, passing from one thought to another: "Surely," said I, "man is but a shadow and life a dream"——
>
> — A shepherd, with a little musical instrument in his hand. The sound of it was exceeding sweet and wrought into a variety of tunes that were inexpressibly melodious. * * * * * I then turned again to the vision which I had been so long contemplating; but instead of the rolling tide, the arched bridge, and the happy islands, I saw nothing but the long hollow valley of Bagdat, with oxen, sheep, and camels grazing upon the sides of it."

What a beautiful termination! What melody—what picture!

F.—Addison was not only the Raphael of Essayists, but a true critic. If you look back to the time at which he wrote his

papers on Milton, you will acknowledge that many remarks upon that great poet's genius, which now seem little better than truisms, were then both new and bold. His specimens of Milton's beauties are selected with exquisite judgment. It is the fashion now to speak contemptuously of Addison, and to characterize his prose as feeble, but I never meet with a quotation from his essays in a work of the present times, without being struck with the contrast which his chaste and careful elegance presents to the glaring and ambitious style of fine writing now in vogue. An extract from the *Spectator*, in a publication of the day, looks like a fragment of ancient sculpture in the studio of a modern artist.

A.—To turn from the gentle Addison to a very different writer —You alluded I think some days ago to Churchill's power of satire. It is so long since I saw his portrait of Fitzpatrick that I should like to have another look at it.

H.—Hand me that tall volume on the shelf behind you, and you shall see what sort of artist an unfair and spiteful critic can characterize as "drivelling and dull." Here it is. This passage is the gem of the *Rolliad*. There is a combination of force and facility in it that is quite *Drydenic*. Had Churchill often written thus, it would have been "vain to blame and useless to praise him"—

FITZPATRICK.

With that low cunning, which in fools supplies,
And amply too, the place of being wise,
Which Nature, kind, indulgent parent, gave
To qualify the blockhead for a knave;
With that smooth falsehood, whose appearance charms,
And reason of each wholesome doubt disarms,
Which to the lowest depths of guile descends,
By vilest means pursues the vilest ends,
Wears Friendship's mask for purposes of spite,
Fawns in the day, and butchers in the night;
With that malignant envy, which turns pale,
And sickens, even if a friend prevail,
Which merit and success pursues with hate,
And damns the worth it cannot imitate;

With the cold caution of a coward's spleen,
Which fears not guilt, but always seeks a skreen,
Which keeps this maxim ever in her view—
What's basely done, should be done safely too;
With that dull, rooted, callous impudence,
Which, dead to shame, and every nicer sense,
Ne'er blush'd, unless, in spreading Vice's snares,
She blunder'd on some virtue unawares;
With all these blessings, which we seldom find
Lavish'd by Nature on one happy mind,
A motley figure, of the Fribble tribe,
Which heart can scarce conceive, or pen describe,
Came simp'ring on; to ascertain whose sex
Twelve sage, impanell'd matrons would perplex.
Nor male, nor female; neither, and yet both;
Of neuter gender, though of Irish growth;
A six-foot suckling, mincing in its gait,
Affected, peevish, prim, and delicate;
Fearful *it* seem'd, though of athletic make,
Lest brutal breezes should too roughly shake
Its tender form, and savage motion spread,
O'er its pale cheeks, *the horrid manly red.*
Much did it talk, in its own pretty phrase,
Of genius and of taste, of play'rs and plays;
Much too of writings, which itself had wrote,
Of special merit, though of little note;
For Fate, in a strange humour, had decreed
That what it wrote, none but itself should read;
Much too it chatter'd of dramatic laws,
Misjudging critics, and misplac'd applause,
Then, with *a self-complacent, jutting, air,*
It smil'd, it smirk'd, it wriggled to the chair;
And, with an awkward briskness, not its own,
Looking around, and perking on the throne,
Triumphant seem'd, when that strange savage dame,
Known but to few, or only known by name,
Plain Common-Sense, appear'd, by Nature there
Appointed, with plain Truth, to guard the chair.
The pageant saw, and blasted with her frown,
To its first state of nothing melted down.
Nor shall the Muse (for even there the pride
Of this vain nothing shall be mortified)

Nor shall the Muse (should Fate ordain her rhymes,
Fond, pleasing thought! to live in aftertimes)
With such a trifler's name her pages blot;
Known be the character, the thing forgot;
Let it, to disappoint each future aim,
Live without sex and die without a name!

A.—Poor Fitzpatrick! One cannot help pitying the unhappy wretch, under the infliction of so terrible a punishment. Satire is an awful weapon in a hand like Churchill's. It is shocking to think how often this powerful instrument has been wielded with cruel effect, by able but unprincipled writers to gratify their own vanity and malice. It is impossible to withhold one's admiration of the withering force of Churchill's lampoon; but I am half inclined to believe that the punishment exceeded the offence, and that the vices and foibles ridiculed were inhumanly exaggerated. I know nothing, however, of the personal history of the man thus snatched from oblivion, gibbeted for the scorn of successive generations,

And festering in the infamy of years.

H.—He was the hero of Garrick's *Fribbleriad*, a work which has been all used up by our fathers' pastry-cooks and trunk-makers. He rendered himself conspicuous by taking a leading part in some play-house riots. While on the subject of satiric poetry, let us turn again to a specimen of satire, at least equal if not superior to Churchill's. Here is Dryden's picture of the celebrated Duke of Buckingham (son of the nobleman, slain by "one Felton.") Personal ill-will, and a thirst of revenge, made Dryden put heart and soul into his work. He never forgave the Duke for making him cut so absurd a figure as Bayes in the *Rehearsal*, a farce which is yet enjoyed by the lovers of wit and humour—

ZIMRI.

Some of their chiefs were princes of the land;
In the first rank of these did Zimri stand:
A man so various, that he seem'd to be
Not one, but all mankind's epitome:

Stiff in opinion, always in the wrong;
Was every thing by starts, and nothing long;
But, in the course of one revolving moon,
Was chymist, fiddler, statesman, and buffoon:
Then all for women, painting, rhyming, drinking,
Besides ten thousand freaks that died in thinking.
Blest madman! who could every hour employ;
With something new to wish, or to enjoy!
Railing and praising were his usual themes;
And both, to show his judgment, in extremes;
So over violent, or over civil,
That every man with him was God or Devil.
In squandering wealth was his peculiar art:
Nothing went unrewarded but desert.
Beggar'd by fools, whom still he found too late;
He had his jest, and they had his estate.
He laugh'd himself from court; then sought relief
By forming parties, but could ne'er be chief:
For, spite of him, the weight of business fell
On Absalom, and wise Achitophel:
Thus, *wicked but in will,* of means bereft,
He left not faction, but of that was left.

Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, is said to have died in the greatest distress, in an obscure inn, in Yorkshire, after having run through a fortune of 50,000 a year. Pope's account of his end is not without its pathos.

THE DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

In the worst inn's worst room, with mat half hung,
The floors of plaister, and the walls of dung;
On once a flock-bed, but repaired with straw,
With tape-tied curtains, never meant to draw,
The George and Garter dangling from that bed,
Where tawdry yellow strove with dirty red;
Great Villiers lies: alas! how chang'd from him,
That life of pleasure, and that soul of whim,
Gallant and gay, in Cliefden's proud alcove:
The bower of wanton Shrewsbury, and love:
Or just as gay at Council, in a ring
Of mimick'd statesmen, and a merry king.

> No wit to flatter left, of all his store!
> No fool to laugh at, which he valu'd more!
> There, victor of his health, of fortune, friends,
> And fame; this lord of useless thousands ends.

While on the subject of satiric portraits, I cannot resist the temptation to associate with the best passages of Dryden and Churchill Pope's famous lines on Addison. It is Pope's masterpiece—

> Peace to all such! but were there one whose fires
> True genius kindles and fair fame inspires,
> Blest with each talent and each art to please,
> And born to write, converse, and live with ease:
> Should such a man, too fond to rule alone,
> Bear, like the Turk, no brother near the throne,
> View him with scornful yet with jealous eyes,
> And hate for arts that caused himself to rise;
> *Damn with faint praise, assent with civil leer,*
> *And without sneering, teach the rest to sneer;*
> *Willing to wound, and yet afraid to strike;*
> *Just hint a fault, and hesitate dislike;*
> Alike, reserved to blame or to commend,
> A timorous foe and a suspicious friend;
> Dreading e'en fools, by flatterers beseiged,
> And so obliging that he ne'er obliged;
> Like Cato give his little senate laws
> And sit attentive to his own applause;
> While wits and templars every sentence raise
> *And wonder with a foolish face of praise—*
> Who but must laugh if such a man there be—
> Who would not weep of Atticus were he?

A.—This is very delicate and subtle satire. Of Pope's satirical pictures, the next in point of merit to this satire on Addison, is the portrait of Lord Harvey (Sporus), which is a good companion picture to Churchill's portrait of Fitzpatrick. Both the subjects are represented to be of the Fribble tribe. Churchill's has more real force and more heartiness of contempt. Pope, in his anxiety to say the most ingenious and striking things, sometimes goes beyond the mark, and loses sight of his subject.

Byron however, greatly admired the whole passage, and referred to its epithets as illustrations of Pope's power of imagination.

H.—We may as well read it then—

> Let Sporus tremble—A. What! that thing of silk?
> Sporus, that mere white curd of asses milk?
> Satire or sense, alas! can Sporus feel?
> Who breaks a butterfly upon a wheel?
> P.—Yet let me *flap this bug with gilded wings,*
> *This painted child of dirt, that stinks and stings.*
> Whose buz the witty and the fair annoys
> Yet wit ne'er tastes and beauty ne'er enjoys;
> So well-bred spaniels civilly delight
> In mumbling of the game they dare not bite.
> *Eternal smiles his emptiness betray,*
> *As shallow streams run dimpling all the way.*
> Whether in florid impotence he speaks,
> And, as the prompter breathes, the puppet squeaks;
> Or, at the ear of *Eve*, familiar toad,
> Half froth, half venom, *spits himself abroad,*
> In puns or politics, or tales or lies,
> Or spite, or smut, or rhymes, or blasphemies.
> His wit, all see-saw, between *that* and *this*—
> Now high, now low, now master up, now miss,
> *And he himself one vile antithesis.*
> *Amphibious thing!* that, acting either part,
> The trifling head or the corrupted heart,
> Fop at the toilet, flatterer at the board,
> Now trips a Lady, and now struts a Lord.
> Eve's tempter thus the Rabbins have exprest—
> A cherub's face, a reptile all the rest:
> Beauty that shocks you, parts that none will trust
> Wit that can creep—and pride that licks the dust.

A.—This is the very concentrated essence of contempt. The epithets are living colors. It would have been as well if poor Lord Harvey had not put his delicate finger into Lady Mary's pie. He is said to have helped her Ladyship in the verses to the translator of Horace. His Lordship, according to Dr. Joseph Warton, to prevent attacks of epilepsy, used to drink asses' milk. It was not very generous in Pope to make such terrible

use of the necessities of a bodily infirmity. He calls him *a painted child of dirt*, because, to soften his ghastly appearance, the effect of sickness, he used a slight quantity of rouge. Bishop Middleton, in his dedication to the history of Tully, praises Lord Harvey in the highest terms, for his good sense, politeness, and patriotism.

No. XXII.

TALFOURD.

S.—Have you read Talfourd's *Ion*?

C.—Yes; and I admire it exceedingly. It is somewhat too classical, however, for the taste of the age.

J.—There was a foolish affectation in its first mode of publication—in the pretence that the work was "printed for private circulation, not published;" for a copy of that private edition seems to have been sent to almost every reviewer in Great Britain. I am told that the *Quarterly* praised it highly. The *Examiner* too spoke warmly of it; but there was something extravagant in its praise—the critic was evidently a personal friend. He insisted upon it, even in opposition to the opinion of the author himself, that the play would act well. I am pretty sure that it would not, and, for Talfourd's sake, I hope the experiment will never be tried.* I think the tragedy

* Since the above dialogue was written, the experiment has been tried; it was perfectly successful. Leigh Hunt in three excellent sonnets records Talfourd's triumph, though the sonnet-writer himself was prevented by sickness from being present on the occasion—

> Yet I was with thee—saw thine high compeers,
> Wordsworth and Landor,—saw the piled array,
> The many-visaged heart looking one way,
> Come to drink beauteous truth at eyes and ears.

reflects credit on the taste and talent of the author, but it is not what every body is now looking for in vain, a genuine Drama. The character of *Ion* is a beautiful abstraction; it is not flesh and blood. There is greatly more poetry in this play than in Addison's *Cato*, but there is not much more dramatic power. The author in his preface acknowledges the delight with which in his youth he first saw the representation of *Cato*; and, though the spirit of later times has improved his taste, there is still occasionally something rather too cold and artificial in his style. I should say that he has been a respectful reader of Mason's tragedies, and an enthusiastic admirer of the old Greek plays. The author did not intend his play for the stage, for which he frankly and modestly confesses, that, not "in matter of form" only, but "in matter of substance" also, it would be found wanting.*

S.—I am glad to see the handsome tribute to Wordsworth in the preface. Talfourd observes that the works of that great writer have exerted a purifying influence on the literature of this country, such as the works of no other poet have exerted; and that they have dissipated the sickly fascinations of gaudy phraseology and cast around the lowliest conditions a new and exquisite light.

J.—It is strange that the scoffs of the *Edinburgh Review* should have had even a nine days' influence upon the public taste, when such a genius as Wordsworth's was the object of them. Talfourd confesses that he was himself for a long time indisposed to read Wordsworth, in consequence of the opinions formerly expressed regarding his productions, by the popular critics. A prodigious change has since come over the spirit of their dream. It once required some boldness to speak in

* Whether this drama be likely long to keep possession of the stage or be really fitted for it, are questions that I leave to others to determine, but that regarded as a work for perusal in the closet, it deserves to live and *will* live, I have not the shadow of a doubt. It is unquestionably an exquisite poem, if it be not a perfect drama.

his praise—it now requires more boldness to censure him. The fate of Wordsworth and others is a proof that ridicule is not the test of truth. The "big reviews" have laughed at Wordsworth, Byron, Keats, Shelley, and James Montgomery, and the laugh was echoed throughout Europe. The critics have since been obliged to eat their own words! The public has at last opened its molish eyes, and begins to perceive that a Reviewer is not always a true prophet. It was the author of *Ion* who wrote that complimentary letter published in the Calcutta papers some time ago about Leigh Hunt, to whose writings he attributed so much of the character of his own mind. You may recollect Leigh Hunt's grateful allusion to that compliment in his letter respecting the Indian Subscribers to his poems.*

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* As perhaps my Indian readers (many of whom have come to India since the period alluded to) might be interested in learning what Leigh Hunt said of the Indian subscriptions and of Talfourd, I here quote a passage from the letter:—

January 22, 1833.

"I must leave your own heart and imagination to judge of the feelings with which I received your letter. It is a fine thing to be thought of at all at so great a distance: but to be thought of in this manner, and to be treated so kindly by so many people, is affecting indeed. I wish I could say anything to Sir Charles Metcalfe, calculated to give him a twentieth part of the pleasure which his gentlemanly impulse of liberality has given me; and indeed I wish I could make a huge long arm, and stretch it over seas and lands, and shake the hand of every one of my new and unknown friends, who have felt thus for a stranger. But it is to you, my dear Sir, I owe most. It is you who have excited all this sympathy, and I am glad to see you surprised at the amount of it. I fancy you a magician waving his wand, and astonished at the beauty of the visions which he has himself conjured up. The Indian addition to our list is a very serious good to me, more so than I will distress you by detailing why, especially as the subscription here, though it flowered admirably at first, and will be eternal flattery to my recollections for the names it included, has not proceeded according to its promise.* Yet I assure you, and I am sure you will

* Leigh Hunt has now a pension from Government of two hundred a year, "as some compensation for the pecuniary difficulties and personal sacrifices he has suffered for the advocacy of principles, the truth of which is now fully acknowedged and acted on."

J.—It is not easy to account for the utter absence of dramatic genius in this age. Men are men still, but they are not like the men of Shakspeare's time. There were giants on the earth in those days. The greatest of our modern poets are mere egotists. They cannot go out of themselves for a single moment. All

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believe, that the sympathy shown me by my Eastern friends, the good will and manifestation of honest heart, evinced by their moving in the business at all, is more valuable to me than the subscription itself. I wish you would make my special acknowledgments to Messrs. Samuel Smith and Co. and to such other gentlemen of the press as it may not be inconvenient to you to convey to them, not excepting the Editor of the *John Bull** who would find me perhaps a better Christian than he seems to suspect. I must find means of sending you a little book of mine entitled *Christianism; or, Belief and Unbelief Reconciled*, which a friend has printed for private circulation, and which I would get you to show him. At all events, his conduct has been Christian on this occasion, and so, I assure him, is my gratitude. It gives me a peculiar species of gratification to think the *native* Editors of the *Reformer* and the *Enquirer* have interested themselves in my behalf. You know how I delight in associations of old books and romances; India to me is an Arabian Night country; all the modern common-places of it, which I have never seen, are accustomed to give way in my mind before its old, exclusively Oriental, aspect; and in finding that I have friends there, time and space seem to roll apart like a cloud, and I fancy myself a new kind of living yet ancient Sindbad, taken by the hand, after a shipwreck, by strangers, with dusk faces and white drapery, under a glowing sun. But, above all, do not let me forget to take particular notice of your article in the *Calcutta Literary Gazette*, so handsome, so well written, so more than kind to me. I have certainly in my time, endeavoured to sow pleasant thoughts in the minds of my fellow-creatures: and I have done it, I will venture to add, at times when my only pleasure consisted in the hope of giving some to others. Neither have I got much in return, but that hope. But when I see an article like yours, I reap indeed a thick harvest in a small compass. Many thanks for it, from the bottom of my heart. It is the one that has touched me more nearly than any which had been written since Mr. Talfourd's, which I was delighted to see you had got, and which must have given you great pleasure, even as a piece of good writing."

I cannot resist the temptation to add the following extract from Talfourd's

* This paper, now called the *Englishman*, is, as most people here are aware, in new hands.

their poetry is but a reflection of their own individual nature. They cannot dive into the hearts of other men. The extravagant praise which has been showered upon Sheridan Knowles as a dramatist, is, in my opinion, an additional illustration of the poverty of the age in dramatic genius. There is as great a deficiency of dramatic power in these times as there was of purely poetical genius in the reign of Hayley.

S.—Knowles has his merits. If less poetical than some other writers for the stage, he has more knowledge of stage effects. His are amongst the best acting plays of these times. But nothing can equal in absurdity some of the reviews of Knowles's works. The stupidity of the criticisms in some of our periodicals is perfectly surprizing. They are almost incredibly bad. Nothing but seeing is believing. They do not merely praise or blame too much, but in the wrong place. A work remarkable for force of style but want of taste, will be praised for its purity, while its strength is passed over, and *vice versa*.

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letter upon the subject of Leigh Hunt's claims to the gratitude of the public.

"How many domestic circles has he (Leigh Hunt) gladdened by imparting a livelier consciousness of their happiness; how many else vacant and listless hours has he made populous with pleasant thoughts; with what living pictures of nature has he startled our solitude; and how often with fine and dexterous touch has he pierced our selfishness and quickened our lazy sympathies into generous action! Had he been contented to subdue his style to the approved forms of composition; to lose the peculiarities of his thought and feeling in the established commonplaces of sentiment; and to sacrifice the nicer varieties of opinion to the creed of any powerful party; he would not now need the assistance of those who can appreciate that strong originality of conception, which, when associated with correspondent vividness of expression, will often deprive a man of genius, who is obstinately true to himself, of the ready acceptance of the world. One circumstance in the history of his mind, however, seems calculated to affect and conciliate all—that an unusual measure of contumely and sorrow, instead of irritating, has mellowed and softened the spirit of his writings—so that although his later productions are not less sparkling than those of his youth, they are far less severe and instinct with a finer humanity, a deeper and more considerate wisdom."

J.—We must not be too sweeping in our censures; some of our periodicals, both weekly and quarterly, are edited with great honesty and talent.

J.—When a criticism appears in a monthly periodical it is attributed to the editor, and, as he is generally a man of some reputation, the crowd take all that he is supposed to say for gospel. But they who are in the secret, know that the editor has very little to do with the brief notices of books at the end of a Magazine. The books for review (with some exceptions) are handed over to some writer, who undertakes the critical department. The critic is sometimes a man of very little talent, and is too often at the beck and call of booksellers, whose good will he is glad to preserve, by an occasional puff of a bad book. I recollect a certain publisher in London (not a native of England,) who always seemed to think a good dinner was a critic's retaining fee. He was once in a towering rage with a reviewer for speaking unfavorably of one of his publications. "*The pig scoundrel,*" he exclaimed, "*swallows moi puddings and moi voins, and then apuses moi pooks!*"

S.—That we may do Talfourd justice, and separate for the evening with noble thoughts in our minds and music in our ears, let me read a scene from his tragedy of *Ion*, and then we can say good night—

To-morrow to fresh fields and pastures new.

SCENE BETWEEN KING ADRASTUS AND HIS SON ION, BOTH OF THEM IGNORANT OF THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO EACH OTHER.

[*Ion is threatened with death.*]

Cry. The king!

Adras. Stranger I bid thee welcome;
We are about to tread the same dark passage,
Thou almost on the instant.—is the sword [*To Crythes.*
Of justice sharpen'd, and the headsman ready?

Cry. Thou may'st behold them plainly in the court;
Even now the solemn soldiers line the ground,
The steel gleams on the altar, and the slave,
Disrobes himself for duty.

Adras. (*To Ion.*) Dost thou see them!
Ion. I do.
Adras. By heaven, he does not change!
If, even now, thou wilt depart, and leave
Thy traitorous thoughts unspoken, thou art free.
Ion. I thank thee for thy offer; but I stand
Before thee for the lives of thousands, rich,
In all that makes life precious to the brave,
Who perish not alone, but in their fall,
Break the far-spreading tendrils that they feed,
And leave them nurtureless. If thou wilt hear me,
For them, I am content to speak no more.
Adras. Thou hast thy wish then. Crythes, till yon dial
Cast its thin shadow on the approaching hour,
I hear this gallant traitor. On the instant,
Come without word, and lead him to his doom.
Now leave us.
Cry. What alone?
Adras. Yes, slave, alone.
He is no assassin! [*Exit Crythes.*
Tell me who thou art.
What generous source owns that heroic blood,
Which holds its course thus bravely? What great wars,
Have nursed the courage that can look on death,
Certain and speedy death, with placid eye!
Ion. I am a simple youth, who never bore
The weight of armour,—one who may not boast
Of noble birth, or valour of his own.
Deem not the powers which nerve me thus to speak
In thy great presence, and have made my heart
Upon the verge of bloody death, as calm,
As equal in its beatings, as when sleep
Approach'd me nestling from the sportive toils
Of thoughtless childhood, and celestial forms,
Began to glimmer through the deepening shadows,
Of soft oblivion to belong to me!
These are the strengths of Heaven; to thee they speak,
Bid thee to hearken to thy people's cry,
Or warn thee that thy hour must shortly come!
Adras. I know it must; so may'st thou spare thy warnings,
The envious gods in me have doom'd a race,

Whose glories stream from the same cloud-girt founts,
Whence their own dawn upon the infant world;
And I shall sit on my ancestral throne
To meet their vengeance; but till then I rule
As I have ever ruled, and thou wilt feel.

Ion. I will not further urge thy safety to thee;
It may be, as thou say'st, too late; nor seek
To make thee tremble at the gathering curse
Which shall burst forth in mockery at thy fall;
But thou art gifted with a nobler sense——
I know thou art my sovereign!—sense of pain
Endured by myriad Argives, in whose souls,
And in whose father's souls, thou and thy fathers
Have kept their cherish'd state; whose heart-strings, still
The living fibres of thy rooted power,
Quiver with agonies thy crimes have drawn
From heavenly justice on them.

Adras. How! my crimes?

Ion. Yes; 'tis the eternal law, that where guilt is,
Sorrow shall answer it; and thou hast not
A poor man's privilege to bear alone,
Or in the narrow circle of his kinsmen,
The penalties of evil, for in thine
A nation's fate lies circled.—King Adrastus!
Steel'd as thy heart is with the usages
Of pomp and power, a few short summers since
Thou wert a child, and canst not be relentless.
Oh! if maternal love embraced thee then,
Think of the mothers who, with eyes unwet,
Glare o'er their perishing children: hast thou shared
The glow of a pure friendship which is born
'Midst the rude sports of boyhood, think of youth
Smitten amidst its playthings;—let the spirit
Of thy own innocent childhood whisper pity!

Adras. In every word thou dost but steel my soul.
My youth was blasted:—parents, brother, kin—
All that should people infancy with joy—
Conspired to poison mine; despoil'd my life
Of innocence and hope—all but the sword
And sceptre—dost thou wonder at me now?

Ion. I knew that we should pity——

Adras. Pity! dare
To speak that word again, and torture waits thee!
I am yet king of Argos. Well, go on——
Thy time is short, and I am pledged to hear.
Ion. If thou hast ever loved——
Adras. Beware! beware!
Ion. Thou hast! I see thou hast! Thou art not marble,
And thou shalt hear me!—Think upon the time
When the clear depths of thy yet lucid soul
Were ruffled with the troublings of strange joy,
As if some unseen visitant from heaven
Touch'd the calm lake, and wreath'd its images
In sparkling waves;—recall the dallying hopes
That on the margin of assurance trembled,
As loth to lose in certainty too bless'd
Its happy being;—taste in thought again,
Of the stolen sweetness of those evening-walks,
When pansied turf was air to winged feet,
And circling forests, ethereal touch
Enchanted, wore the livery of the sky,
As if about to melt in golden light,
Shapes of one heavely vision; and thy heart,
Enlarged by its new sympathy with one,
Grew bountiful to all!
Adras. That tone! That tone!
Whence came it; from thy lips—it cannot be
The long-hush'd music of the only voice
That ever spake unbought affection to me,
And waked my soul to blessing;—O sweet hours
Of golden joy, ye come! your glories break
Through my pavilion'd spirit's sable folds!
Roll on! roll on!—Stranger, thou dost enforce me
To speak of things unbreathed by lip of mine,
To human ear:—wilt listen?
Ion. As a child.

No. XXIII.

THOMAS CAMPBELL.

A.—I think you overrate Campbell as a poet; though I confess I have not read him for some years, and a few of his best things may have faded from my memory.

D.—Campbell's poetry has lived through many vicissitudes of the public taste, and has preserved its original popularity. The attractiveness of Scott's metrical romances, and the imposing grandeur of Byron's passionate and energetic Muse, and the wit and pathos, and brilliancy and melody of Moore, and the fantastic dreaminess of Coleridge and Shelley, and the rich fancy of Keats, and the picturesqueness and refined hilarity of Hunt, and the majestic philosophy of Wordsworth, have not taught the public to turn away with indifference from the elegance and terseness of Campbell.

A.—Is there not in Campbell too great a leaning to the artificial? Is there not something of the primness of the old school about him? Does he not seem born an age too late?

D.—Campbell, Rogers and Crabbe preserve a sort of connection between the old school and the new. Their earlier productions breathe of Pope and Goldsmith. Their later productions are modified by the taste of the present day. But perhaps the new style is not so well suited to their genius as the old. Crabbe, in his attempt to rival the greater freedom and fluency lately introduced into our heroic verse, fell into a coarseness and vulgarity, from which his first productions were comparatively free, but what he lost in elegance he gained in strength. Campbell and Rogers, however, by neglecting (as in *Theodric* and *Italy*) their early practice of compression, turned their solid bullion into their leaf.

A.—The *Italy* is very feeble—but remember that it is in

blank-verse—a sort of composition which nothing but true energy can support. Every critic would have anticipated the failure of Rogers, in the attempt to wield an instrument which is obedient only to the strongest hand. Even Wordsworth's blank-verse is too often verbose and prosaic. But Rogers' poem of *Human Life* is, in my opinion, all the better for the author's having aimed at greater ease and freedom than he exhibited in his *Pleasures of Memory*, when he thought only of the grace and tenderness and polish of the *Traveller* and the *Deserted Village*.

D.—I think the *Human Life* has less chance with posterity than his earlier poem. There is a certain finish and completeness in that production which seems to fit it for preservation. Slipshod, careless, productions soon fall into oblivion. The artistical precision of the first verses of Rogers will cause them to be admired when works of greater genius but less polish are forgotten. There are poems of Shelley, which compared with the verses of Rogers, make the one man seem a Titan, the other a pigmy. But the careful and highly finished toy of a Lilliputian may sometimes out-last the ruder and bolder workmanship of a Gulliver. Shelley was a great poet, but he was an indifferent artist. All his productions, though touched here and there with the flashes of a rich imagination, are more or less obscure, convulsive and fragmentary. Even Byron had much less poetical genius than Shelley, but then, what he had, he could turn to a better account—he was a more skilful artist. Campbell's art was equal to his nature. If he had been as little of an artist as Shelley, he would probably never have convinced the world that the Gods had made him poetical. As it is, he is a more popular poet than Shelley, though Shelley winged his wild way in a far higher atmosphere. Hand me, if you please, that copy of Campbell on the shelf behind you, and I will read to you some of my favorite passages.

A.—Here it is. It is a presentation copy I see, from the poet himself, and perhaps his autograph has made you partial to the contents of the volume.

D.—My judgment would not be worth much if it were

so easily biassed. Campbell was always one of my favorite poets—

> At Summer's eve, when heaven's etherial bow,
> Spans with bright arch the glittering hills below,
> Why to yon mountain turns the musing eye,
> Whose sun-bright summit mingles with the sky?
> Why do those cliffs of shadowy tint appear,
> More sweet than all the landscape smiling near?
> *'Tis distance lends enchantment to the view,*
> *And robes the mountain in its azure hue.*

I have read this passage for the sake of the last couplet, which is one of those fine illustrations which only true poets can produce, and which, when once brought to our notice, take their place in the memory for ever. You will find a greater abundance of lines of this nature, which become familiar to the public as household images, in the works of Campbell than in those of any other writer since Pope—except Wordsworth.

A.—But Byron has shown that the couplet in question is an echo of a passage in Dyer's *Grongar Hill.*

> As yon summits, soft and fair,
> Clad in colors of the air,
> Which to those who journey near
> Barren, brown and rough appear—
> Still we tread the same coarse way,
> The present still a cloudy day.

D.—Campbell may or may not have had Dyer's lines in his mind; but if he has taken the hint from Dyer he has, at all events, improved upon it. Dyer's lines are not quoted as Campbell's are, and never will be.

> Can Wisdom lend, with all her heavenly power
> The pledge of joy's anticipated hour;
> Ah no! she darkly sees the fate of man—
> Her dim horizon bounded to a span;
> Or if she hold an image to the view
> *'Tis nature pictured too severely true.*

The last line is in every one's memory: so are these lines—

And song is but the eloquence of truth.

'Tis the sunset of life gives me mystical lore,
And coming events cast their shadows before.

But mortal pleasure, what art thou in truth?
The torrent's smoothness ere it dash below!

There are some beautiful images even in *Theodric.*

But grief seemed lingering in its lengthened swell
And like so many tears the trickling touches fell.

When by the very smell of dairy farms,
And fragrance from the mountain herbage blown,
Blindfold his native hills he might have known.

A.—Yes—these are gems. But do they convey a correct impression of Campbell's general character?

D.—I think so. You must not expect to be startled or charmed with some radiant jewel on every inch of a poet's garment. But it is fair to judge of a poet's powers by his more successful passages. You may look in vain all over Hayley's correct and smooth but dull and uninspired pages for a single streak of light.

While beauty's deeply pictured smiles impart
A pang more dear than pleasure to the heart.

A.—That second line, is a pretty one, but I have met with the leading idea of it—almost the words, I think,—in one of Bamfylde's Sonnets.

D.—Campbell, like Milton, occasionally borrowed a hint from an inferior writer; but, like Milton also, he often turned a very ordinary thought into something fitted to live for ever. Hazlitt has complained of Campbell's taking an idea from Blair's *Grave.*

Like angel-visits, few, and far between—

and says that, by altering the expression, he spoiled it. Blair has it—

——— Its visits
Like those of angels, short and far between.

Few and far between, says Hazlitt, are the same thing;—not exactly so, I think.

A.—No—they might have been *few and in close succession,* which is quite a different thing from *few and far between.*

D.—Campbell has boldly versified Sterne's celebrated image of the Recording Angel blushing to report at Heaven's chancel, my Uncle Toby's oath—

> But sad as Angels for the good man's sin,
> Wept to record, and blushed to give it in.

A.—Campbell's version is no improvement on the original, and I am surprized at so elegant and polished a writer coming to so bad an end—*to give it in*—is prose slip-slop.

D.—He has also versified Addison's concluding sentence in his beautiful story of *Theodosius and Constantia.* "They were lovely in their lives, and in their deaths they were not divided."*

> 'Twas sung how they were lovely in their lives,
> And in their deaths had not divided been.

A.—Oh wretched change! *Had not divided been!!* Surely this is not a Milton-like improvement of stolen property.

D.—How fine is the concluding couplet of the passage.—

> Now far he weeps where scarce a summer smiles
> On Behring's rocks, or Greenland's naked isles;
> Cold on his midnight watch the breezes blow,
> From wastes that slumber in eternal snow;
> *And waft across the wave's tumultuous roar*
> *The wolf's long howl from Onalaska's shore.*

A.—Yes—That wolf will howl for ever!

D.—Perhaps the compliment to Kosciusko—the finest ever paid to a great patriot—is one of the most spirited passages in the *Pleasures of Hope.*—

> In vain, alas! in vain, ye gallant few!
> From rank to rank your volleyed thunder flew:—

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* "Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives and in their deaths they were not divided."—*Samuel, chap. 1, v. 2, 3, Book II.*

Oh, bloodiest picture in the book of Time
Sarmatia fell, unwept, without a crime;
Found not a generous friend, a pitying foe,
Strength in her arms nor mercy in her woe!
Dropped from her nerveless grasp the shattered spear,
Closed her bright eye and curbed her bright career.
Hope for a season bade the world farewell
And freedom shrieked as Kosciusko *fell!*

A.—A very fine passage, indeed, but the versification is a little too *Darwinian.* Allow me to take the volume for a minute, just to turn to *Gertrude of Wyoming.*—Campbell should not have tried the Spenserian Stanza. What a feeble commencement!

On Susquehana's side, fair Wyoming!
Although the wild flower on thy ruined wall
And roofless homes, a sad remembrance bring
Of what thy gentle people did befall;
Yet thou wert once the loveliest land of all
That see the Atlantic wave their morn restore.
Sweet land! may I thy lost delights recall
And paint thy Gertrude in her bowers of yore
Whose beauty was the love of Pennsylvania's shore!

It is clear enough that the poet had a very hard struggle indeed to build up this single stanza, feeble as it is. It is odd that one who is generally so careful and condensed a writer should have satisfied himself with such a piece of drawling verbosity. What does he mean by a wave restoring a morn? Or is it the morning that restores the wave? He should have begun with the second stanza. The first stanza of the third canto is almost as bad as the first Stanza of the canto—

O love! in such a wilderness as this,
Where transport and security entwine,
Here is the empire of thy perfect bliss,
And here thou art indeed a God divine.
Here shall no forms abridge, no hours confine
The views, the walks, that boundless joys inspire!
Roll on, ye days of raptured influence, shine!
Nor, blind with ecstacy's celestial fire,
Shall love behold the spark of earth-born time expire.

A poet should never let us see that he is obliged to twist a thought to accomodate his measure. It is obvious that Campbell would not have made transport and security *entwine* if he had not been compelled to do so by the necessity for a rhyme; and he who knows anything of the poet's art by labours of his own will see that *entwine* was not the first word that occurred; but that there has been some change of rhyme necessitated by a failure in the first attempt to construct the stanza. All that the poet meant to say is in the first four lines. The rest is mere filling up. What a miserable line is the seventh! *Roll* on, ye days, *shine!!*—days of *raptured influence!!* After *transport and security* why should we have so much about *boundless joy, raptured influence, ecstacy's fire?* "Words—words—words!" What is the meaning of the last two lines? If he means that the lovers will be so occupied with delight and with each other as to take no note of time, he has a very round-about way of saying it.

D.—You must really let me take back the volume again. You only look out for petty faults.

A.—With all my heart. Here it is,—now let us have some of the beauties.

D.—Let me read you three exquisite stanzas greatly admired by Hazlitt.

> A loved bequest,—and I may half impart—
> To them that feel the strong paternal tie
> *How like a new existence in his heart*
> *That living flower—uprose beneath his eye*
> Dear as she was from Cherub in fancy
> From hours when she would round his garden play,
> To time when as the ripening years went by,
> Her lovely mind could culture well repay,
> And more engaging grew from pleasing day to day.
>
> I may not paint the thousand infant charms;
> (Unconscious fascination, undesigned!
> The orison repeated in his arms
> For God to bless her sire and all mankind;
> The book, the bosom on his knee reclined,

Or how sweet fairy lore he bade her con,
(The playmate ere the teacher of her mind);
All unaccompanied else her heart had gone
Till now in Gertrude's eyes their ninth blue summer shone.

And summer was the tide, and sweet the hour
When sire and daughter saw with fleet descent
An Indian from his bark approach their bower.
Of buskined limb and swarthy lineament;
The red wild feathers on his brow were blent
And bracelets bound the arm that helped to light
A boy, who seemed, as he beside him went
Of Christian vesture and complexion bright
Led by his dusky guide, like morning brought by night.

A.—These are beautiful lines, but they are not without their imperfections. Is it correct to speak of a *book reclined* upon a knee? Campbell has not mastered the Spenserian stanza—on the contrary, it has mastered him. What does he mean by

And bracelets bound *the arm that helped to light a boy?*

D.—That helped to make his progress lighter—easier. It is vaguely expressed, I admit. But why dwell so pertinaciously on flaws in diamonds? Look at their general lustre.

Here is a noble stanza.

He said and strained unto his heart the boy;
Far differently, the mute Oneyda took
His calumet of peace and cup of joy
As monumental bronze unchanged his look;
A soul that pity touched, but never shook;
Trained from his tree-rocked cradle to his bier
The fierce extemes of good and ill to brook
Impassive—*fearing but the shame of fear*—
A stoic of the woods—a man without a tear.

A.—A fine North-American-Indian picture. The last line but two, however, is rather unsatisfactory. Campbell is again fettered by the rhyme, or he would not have spoken of *brooking good*—nor of the *fierce* extreme of *good.*

D.—I see you are nothing if not critical. How like you this stanza in the address to the Rainbow?

How glorious is thy girdle cast
O'er mountain, tower and town,
Or mirrored in the ocean vast
A thousand fathoms down.

A.—The word *girdle* is used improperly. The rainbow spans or over-arches the town—it does not encircle it. A young poet of the name of Patmore has a much more correct allusion to a rainbow.

It is a venerable place,
An old ancestral ground,
So *wide, the rainbow wholly stands*
Within its lordly bound.

D.—I was just going to turn to the spirited and energetic death-song of the Oneyda Chief, but I recollected a line or two that would feed your hyper-criticism.

A.—Pray hand me the book again for a minute.—Observe how hardly the poet is pressed for a rhyme to *breeze* in the last stanza but one of the 3d canto of *Gertrude*—

Turn not from me thy breath, more exquisite
Than odours cast on Heaven's own shrine—*to please*—

This is as bad as Moore's couplet on music—

And music too! Dear Music! that can touch
Beyond all else, the heart that loves it *much*.

The language is exceedingly stiff and inverted throughout the *Gertrude of Wyoming* I repeat my opinion that he cannot handle the Spenserian stanza.

Or if a shade more pleasing *them* o'ercast.

And louder lamentations heard *we* rise.

Green Albin! what though he no more survey
Thy ships at anchor *on* the quiet shore.

He does not mean that the ships are on shore, but is thinking of a spectator *on* the shore observing them at anchor *off* the

shore. I recollect a singularly false and bad rhyme was once pointed out to Campbell (by a writer in *Blackwood's Magazine*) as occurring in the poem of *O'Connor's Child*, and the poet it seems had the good sense to make the right use of the critic's objection.

> I gazed, and felt upon my *lips*
> The unfinished accents hang,
> One moment's bliss, one burning *kiss*—

He has altered it, I see, to—

> But Heaven, at last, my soul's *eclipse*
> Did with a vision bright inspire :
> I woke and felt upon my *lips*
> A Prophetess's fire.

I wish he had altered or suppressed the following stanza (also noticed in *Blackwood*) or at all events that he had got rid of the s's. It is said by foreigners that the English hiss like geese. Such lines as these must tend strongly to justify that censure—

> Love's a boundless burning waste,
> Where bliss's stream we seldom taste,
> And *s*till more *s*eldom flee;
> *S*uspen*s*e'*s* thorn*s*, *S*uspicion'*s* *s*ting*s*,
> Yet *s*omehow love a *s*omething bring*s*
> That'*s* *s*weet, even though we *s*igh Woe'*s* me!

I wonder he did not strike this stuff out of his later editions.

A.—Here: take the book again, and let me have the Death-song you were just alluding to.

D.—I will only give you one passage—and that a perfect one —that you may not throw a general blight upon one of the finest lyrics in the language—

> To-morrow let us do or die!
> But when the bolt of death is hurled
> Ah! whither then with thee to fly,
> Shall Outalissi roam the world?
> Seek we thy once-loved home?—
> The hand is gone that cropt its flowers:
> Unheard their clock repeats its hours!

Cold is the hearth within their bowers!
And should we thither roam,
Its echoes, and its empty tread,
Would sound like voices from the dead!

A.—I am not sure that this is quite criticism-proof. How long had the house been deserted? If I knew that, I might calculate whether the clock was still repeating the hours.

D.—Oh, you are as bad as the man who criticised Garrick's "Soliloquy," by a stop-watch. The *Battle of the Baltic* and *Ye Mariners of England* are matchless lyrics—what fire, clearness, and compression in every stanza!

A.—Do not be too lavish of your commendation.

D.—The first four stanzas of the *Battle of the Baltic* are without a flaw—

Of Nelson and the North,
Sing the glorious day's renown,
When to battle fierce came forth
All the might of Denmark's crown,
And her arms along the deep proudly shone;
By each gun the lighted brand,
In a bold determined hand,
And the Prince of all the land
Led them on.

Like leviathans afloat,
Lay their bulwarks on the brine;
While the sign of battle flew
On the lofty British line:
It was ten of April morn by the chime:
As they drifted on their path,
There was silence deep as death;
And the boldest held his breath
For a time.

But the might of England flushed
To anticipate the scene;
And her van the fleeter rushed
O'er the deadly space between.
"Hearts of Oak!" our Captains cried; when each gun
From its adamantine lips
Spread a death-shade round the ships,

Like the hurricane eclipse
Of the sun.

Again! again! again!
And the havock did not slack,
Till a feeble cheer the Dane
To our cheering sent us back;—
Their shots along the deep slowly boom:—
Then ceased—and all is wail
As they strike the shattered sail;
Or, in conflagration pale,
Light the gloom.

A.—Very noble verses, indeed! But what a pity it is that the poet ends this truly national and natural lyric with a commonplace allusion to a mermaid.

While the billow mournful rolls,
And the mermaid's song condoles,
Singing glory to the souls
Of the brave!

D.—It seems decreed that nothing human shall be absolutely perfect. There are not in the English language more manly and nervous lines than some of the best in *Ye Mariners of England*; except, perhaps, those in the *Battle of the Baltic*—

Ye mariners of England!
Who guard our native seas;
Whose flag has braved, a thousand years,
The battle and the breeze!
Your glorious standard launch again
To match another foe!
And sweep through the deep
While the stormy tempests blow,

Britannia needs no bulwark,
No towers along the steep;
Her march is o'er the mountain waves
Her home is on the deep.

These lines are in every Englishman's memory who has a spark of patriotic feeling in his bosom.

A.—I wish the whole poem had been equal to them.

D.—It is odd that so careful a writer as Campbell should have allowed his verses to go through so many editions with all their original errors and oversights. In his fine ballad of *Lord Ullin's Daughter* he uses the word *drearer* for *drearier*. I wish you had been at his elbow when he delivered this stanza to the printer's devil—

> But still as wilder blew the wind,
> And as the night grew *drearer*,
> Adown the glen rode armed men,
> Their trampling sounded nearer.

In his *Ode to Winter* the line—

> Of innocence descend—

Has no corresponding rhyme. I cannot scan the last line of this stanza—

> Though my wallet was scant, I remembered his case,
> Nor refused my last crust to his pitiful face;
> But he died at my feet on a cold winter day,
> And I played a sad lament for my poor dog Tray.

In the noble stanzas entitled *The Last Man*, he says,

> My lips that speak thy dirge of death—
> Their rounded gasp and *gurgling breath*
> To *see* thou shalt not boast.

In *Hohenlinden* he makes a sound flash—

> And *louder* than the bolts of heaven
> Far *flashed* the red artillery.

A.—I suppose he means that the red artillery—which was louder than the bolts of heaven—flashed;—but even that would be a sort of flash in the pan—a false climax. I see you can find fault as well as I can.

D.—I am vexed to observe even these slight defects in works of such extraordinary finish; defects which could have been so easily avoided had they caught the poet's eye. I have just opened

the book at the *Valedictory Stanzas to J. P. Kemble*; how truly spirited and original and elegant they are! What lines are these!

Like fields refreshed with dewy light
When the sun smiles his last,
Thy parting presence makes more bright
Our memory of the past.

For ill can Poetry express
Full many a tone of thought sublime,
And painting mute and motionless
Steals but a glance of time;
But by the mighty actor brought,
Illusion's perfect triumphs come,—
Verse ceases to be airy thought
And Sculpture to be dumb.

Taste like the silent dial's power,
That when supernal light is given
Can measure inspiration's hour
And tells its height in heaven.

A poet who can write in this style must please all classes of readers, and may make sure of immortality.

No. XXIV.

POPULARITY.

F.—I have heard of a gentleman who actually spoke of *Hudibras* as the author of a witty poem—mistaking the title of the poem for the name of the author. It reminded me of the question of *Who wrote Shakspeare?*

H.—Yet perhaps that gentleman was a man of the world and a clever fellow. Such a mistake is a slip of memory or a deficiency of information on a particular point; but it would not prove the party alluded to incapable of appreciating the wit

and humour of Butler. "A rose by any other name would smell as sweet." People are apt to confound the knowledge of names, dates, and words, with a knowledge of thoughts and things. A man with the original genius of a Newton or a Shakspeare might have made the same mistake, as the gentleman you have alluded to. Indeed the probability is that Newton himself might have made it.* There are pedagogues who write down Shakspeare as an ass, because he made Bohemia a maritime country, and wrote *who* for *whom.*

F.—You are thinking of the passage in Hamlet—"*Saw! Who?* It is suggested by Seymour in his "Remarks," that this is only a common elipsis and not false grammar, and that the full meaning is *who was it whom you saw?*

H.—I am not anxious to protect Shakspeare's reputation either as a geographer or a grammarian. I leave him to the tender mercies of a Guthrie or a Lindley Murray.

F.—Do we not excuse every thing to great and long acknowledged genius, while we gratify our spleen and envy by the severest hyper-criticism on rising names? I met, a few days ago, with what I thought a very harsh critique on the poetical works of Letitia Elizabeth Landon. The critic takes her plots to pieces in a way that scarcely any plot could bear. If the same sort of criticism were applied to Shakspeare, his principal plots might be rendered quite as ludicrous as L. E. L.'s The Fadladeens of criticism can vex the noblest writers, as the smallest flies can irritate the lion.

H.—I have read the critique you speak of. The Reviewer charges L. E. L. with abruptness and want of invention. He says that the principal incidents in her tale, have all a similarly melodramatic turn, a sort of commonplace extravagance, and that nearly all her heroes and heroines meet with the most startling and improbable adventures that were ever recorded in the pages of romance. Her lovers are awfully woe-begone, and affected with

* It just occurs to me to mention that at page 221, by some slip of the pen, or an inadvertancy in making some alterations on the last proof, the *Essay on Pope* is attributed to *Thomas* Warton, instead of to his brother *Joseph.*

a sickly sentimentality, until they very interestingly die at the same moment in each other's arms, and are buried in the same grave. I deny that Shakspeare's plots and characters would appear to equal disadvantage if explained and criticised on the same plan, and in the same manner that the Reviewer has adopted in the criticism on L. E. L. They have infinite variety and verisimilitude.

F.—I know of no poetry of the time that was so popular as L. E. L.'s on its first appearance, and I think popularity a fair criterion of poetical merit. No very bad writer, perhaps, was ever widely popular. The public do not foster dullness.

H.—L. E. L. was popular amongst certain classes of readers, while the rare powers of Keats and Shelley were ridiculed, and their poetry neglected. L. E. L.'s poetry sold much more rapidly and extensively, not only than that of Keats and Shelley, but than that of Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey.

F.—The Editor of the *London Literary Gazette*, I recollect, paid a glowing tribute to the merit of L. E. L. "As far," he said, "as his poetical taste and critical judgment enabled him to form an opinion, he could adduce no instance, ancient or modern, of similar talent and excellence."

H.—When a writer like L. E. L. is thus characterized in a public literary journal of extensive circulation—when terms of eulogy are lavished on her name, that if applied to the greatest of living poets, would bring the blood into their cheeks—when she is elevated by implication above Homer and Virgil, and Dante and Spenser, and Shakspeare and Milton, it is time indeed for all honest and sober-minded critics to perform their duty, and warn the multitude from listening to such monstrous absurdities.

F.—If Jerdan went a little too far, we must allow something for the real kindness of his nature, and the influence on his judgment of a personal acquaintance with a poetess of the most amiable character and the most charming manners.

H.—But this sort of partiality brings all criticism into contempt.

F.—Depend upon it no critic can make a bad writer popular.

He may help one into notice or notoriety, but he cannot make people delight in undelightful verse. And, after all, I think with Pope, who said he did not care for the high-flyers at Button's—the critical cliques of the coffee-house—so long as he had the public with him. The mass of readers decide a poet's fate.

H.—When we compare the character of the great body of readers with that of the "*fit audience,*" though "*few,*" with which the loftiest poets have been contented, we at once account for the temporary success of verse that does not deserve to live. Is there a single critic of any reputation for sound judgment, who would seriously compare L. E. L. with the master spirits of the age? Some of the most judicious of our periodical critics have spoken of her with a qualified praise, to which I would myself most willingly subscribe. She has her merits, but they are not of the highest order. It is absurd to confound the ranks of genius by indiscriminate laudation. If I acknowledge the pathos and melody of a Goldsmith, am I inconsistent if I also assert that it would be the extremest stupidity in any one to put him by the side of Milton? If I recognize the delicacy and tenderness of many of L. E. L.'s productions, must I necessarily regard her as on a par with the most gifted of her contemporaries? There are critics, it seems, who can distinguish no gradations in genius, and who apply the same epithets to the author of a collection of pretty love-ditties, as they apply to the sternest and most exalted of Epic bards!

F.—Do you deny that popularity is a fair criterion of merit?

H.—I admit that *extensive popularity is a pretty certain* indication *that a writer is not utterly devoid of every species of merit,* though it by no means follows that he is necessarily superior to his less favored rivals. Popularity is no more a proof of genius, than unpopularity is a proof of the want of it. Neither is a decisive test. But as popularity implies merit of some kind or other, of however low a grade, yet palpable to common readers, so unpopularity is often occasioned by certain defects that are equally obvious to the general eye, while the excellencies, if such there be, require more penetration to discover, and more taste to

appreciate, than are possessed by the multitude. Let us apply this argument. L. E. L. possesses merit; her merit, whatever it may be, is obvious to the general eye; and she is, therefore, a *popular* poet. On the other hand, Wordsworth has also merit, but it is of a kind which requires more than common taste and penetration to discover and appreciate (his defects being palpable and his beauties recondite), and he is, therefore, an *unpopular* poet. Popularity is not always ephemeral. It is sometimes lasting. But popularity and fame are very different things, and may be possessed separately by different poets for the same length of time. Goldsmith is a more *popular* poet than Milton, but Milton has more *fame*. L. E. L. is more *popular* than Wordsworth, and may continue to be so, but Wordsworth has now, and will continue to have, more *fame*. For every admirer of Milton and Spencer, perhaps L. E. L. could number half a dozen! What does all this demonstrate? That popularity is an unerring criterion of genius? or that the *many* are not the best judges? A true poetical taste is almost as rare as poetical genius *itself*. Shakspeare, let people talk as they will, is not a *popular* writer, even now, as far as pure poetry is concerned. His plots, characters, and incidents alone are what attract the mob. The gods of the gallery applaud as much as the critics in the pit, but is it because they have an equally vivid sense of the purely *poetical* beauties of Shakspeare? By no means. The critics have pointed out his matchless merits, and the mass of readers merely raise an echo. The multitude are always *finally* led into right opinions by the judicious *few*, to whom Milton has so beautifully appealed. Shakspeare, I dare say, was regarded by *many* of his contemporaries as a very ignorant fellow, and Waller, once a *popular* poet, spoke in the most contemptuous terms of an old blind school-master of the name of Milton, who wrote a poem remarkable for nothing but its length. Some of our greatest poets have been treated with neglect by *the great body* of their contemporaries, and exalted by posterity. "Lord Bacon," says Wordsworth, "in his multifarious writings, no where quotes or alludes to Shakspeare, and Dryden has told us that even in his

time, two of the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher were acted for one of the prince of dramatic bards. And, so faint and limited was the perception of his poetic beauties in the time of Pope, that in his edition of the plays, with a view of rendering a *necessary* service to the general reader, he printed between inverted commas those passages which he thought most worthy of notice! Only eleven of Shakspeare's plays were printed in his life time. *In one hundred years were published but four editions of his works!* 'How little,' says Mr. Steevens, 'Shakspeare was once read, may be understood from Tate, who, in his dedication to the altered play of *King Lear*, speaks of the original as AN OBSCURE PIECE, RECOMMENDED TO HIS NOTICE BY A FRIEND,' and the author of the *Tatler*, having occasion to quote a few lines out of Macbeth, was content to receive them from Davenant's alterations of that now celebrated drama, in which almost every original beauty is either awkwardly disguised or arbitrarily omitted." "The nation," says Dr. Johnson, "had been satisfied with only *two* editions of Shakspeare's works from 1623 to 1664, a period of 41 years."

F.—But recollect how few readers there were at that time.

H.—That this disgraceful circumstance was not owing to "a paucity of readers," may be satisfactorily proved by a reference to the fate of other poets. A *seventh* edition of Cowley's Poems was printed in 1681. A *fourth* edition of Flatman's Poems was printed in 1686, and in the same year was published the *fifth* edition of Waller's. The productions of *Norris*, a now forgotten poet, went through *nine* editions a few years after!* Nor was Shakspeare alone thus neglected and thrown into the shade by the POPULARITY of such writers as Cowley, Flatman, Waller and Norris! The divine Milton himself, for nearly a century shared a similar fate. The early editions of *Paradise Lost* were printed in a form that allowed them to be sold at a low price, and yet only three editions of the work were published in eleven

* I am indebted for most of these particulars to one of Wordsworth's prefaces.

years, during which many inferior poems enjoyed a sale of twenty times the extent. Milton only received five pounds for the first edition, published in 1667. It was stipulated that he should receive five pounds more for the second edition, and another five pounds if it reached a third. After the publication of the third edition, the widow, to whom the copy was then to devolve, sold all her claims to the book-seller for eight pounds! You once told me, that no great poet was ever neglected in his life-time, and you now say that extensive popularity is an unerring test of merit!

F.—What is called the public (be that circle great or small) has never been known to neglect true genius, or to foster dulness!

H.—What can you mean by the "public, *be that circle great or small?*" Do you imply that there are *two publics*, and that one or the other is sure to patronize true genius? There are crowds who admire L. E. L. and neglect Wordsworth, while, on the other hand, a few admire Wordsworth and neglect L. E. L. Can *both* these parties be called *the public?* If so, it is quite clear that *no* poet, good or bad, was ever yet neglected, for the meanest scribbler has *some* admirers, and so had Milton in his most "evil days."

F.—Oh, you know very well what I mean.

H.—Upon my word I do not. Your indistinct mode of expression sometimes renders it difficult for me to grapple with your arguments. If you mean the great body of readers (which are usually called *the public* in reference to literary questions), you are easily answered. I refer you to the names of Hayley, Glover, and Sir Richard Blackmore. Every one familiar with the history of literature, is aware that these writers were regarded as men of great "mark and likelihood" in their own times, though they are thought very dull fellows now! The prosaic Hayley was extravagantly admired as a poet, and his works had a large sale. Glover's *Leonidas*, which no one reads now, is said by one of the Wartons (I forget which) to have been "most eagerly perused, and *universally* admired."

F.—And I contend it deserved that admiration.

H.—I think not. As to Sir Richard Blackmore, his poem of *Prince Arthur* had a prodigious sale, and met with such distinguished honour as raised the animosity of Dennis and the envy of Dryden. Even Dr. Johnson himself speaks of Blackmore's poem of the *Creation* in a manner that shows him to have been prejudiced in the author's favour by the ignorant admiration of *the public!* "This poem," says he, in his *Lives of the Poets,* "if he had written nothing else, would have transmitted him to posterity as *among the first favourites of the English Muse.*" The success of Elkanah Settle, whose very name carries a ludicrous association with it, made Dryden tremble for his own fame. The extreme popularity of one of the former's *Tragedies in Rhyme* was sufficient, according to Dr. Johnson, to make Dryden think his supremacy of reputation in some danger, and he could not repress those emotions, which *he* called indignation, and others jealousy. So popular a poet was this Elkanah Settle, that it was thought necessary by the booksellers to bring out his work in a style of peculiar splendour. His was the first play that was "embellished with sculptures," and this distinction gave his *rival,* Dryden, so much pain, that he attacked him furiously, both in prose and verse. There is no limit to the obliquities of admiration, or the versatilities of taste. The *Monthly Review,* edited by Dr. Kenrick, a learned and able man, attacked Goldsmith's Poems on their first appearance, and described the *Traveller* as *"a flimsy poem."* A contemporary critic spoke of Gray's *Elegy* in the following terms. "This little poem, *however humble its pretensions,* is not without elegance or merit." "The *Odes of Collins,*" says D'Israeli "were purchased by Millar (the John Murray of those days), and printed in the form of a slight pamphlet, but all the interest of that great bookseller could never introduce them into notice. Not even an idle compliment is recorded to have been paid to the poet." He consigned his Odes to the flames in a fit of despair, and to the perpetual recollections of his poetical misfortunes are we to attribute the unsettled st[illegible] of his mind, which ended at last in madness. I think I have now sufficiently maintained my

position that the public often *"foster dulness,"* that a popular poet is not always a true one, and that the greatest poet may be underrated and neglected by the mass of his contemporaries, and yet be raised into splendid fame by the voice of posterity. If my arguments, therefore, are worth anything, the great popularity of L. E. L. is no proof of her deserving more praise than I have given her; while Wordsworth, and Coleridge, and Keats, and Shelley, at one time *comparatively* neglected by general readers, may one day occupy so conspicuous a position in the temple of fame, that even the ignorant vulgar may repeat their names with reverence.

F.—Your superior memory enables you to put me to some disadvantage, but it does not justify your decided tone.

H.—I only express my own opinions, with the same confidence that you generally display in expressing your own. *You may* be right and *I may* be wrong. As to my illustrations, I owe them chiefly to Wordsworth and D'Israeli.

F.—I call upon you to prove that the *intellectual* public is apt to err, and then you may assume that it has erred in L. E. L's. case.

H.—You have not yet proved that she is more admired by the *intellectual* part of the public than she is admired by me. I have admitted that L. E. L. has *some* merit, and that she was once extravagantly esteemed by a large majority of readers; but are the *majority* the *intellectual* portion of mankind? I think not.

F.—I see no use in continuing the discussion.

H.—Drop it, by all means.

No. XXV.

SHELLEY, KEATS, AND COLERIDGE.

H.—I do not like to hear you speak so slightingly of Shelley as you sometimes do: surely he was the greatest and most gifted of our later poets?

A.—I do not think so. I defy you to put your finger on a single poem of his, of a page in length, that does not teem with faults. His imagery is like the flashing of fragments of a mirror, and his diction in general is like variously colored mist. He is a dreamer, not a thinker. His best things remind one of the inspiration of opium.

H.—This is gross and extravagant injustice. Shelley's insight into the spiritual and mystical portions of human nature and the universe was infinitely more subtle and profound than that of any other poet of his time. Compared to him, Wordsworth is a puerile proser, and Byron was *of the earth earthy*. Shelley is truly the poet's poet.

A.—But even poets themselves complain that he is incomprehensible. Charles Lamb, who, though he did not write first-rate poetry himself, was of a truly poetical temperament, and was a first-rate critic upon poetry, says, in a letter to Bernard Barton, the Quaker bard, "I can no more understand Shelley than you can. His poetry is 'thin sown with profit or delight.'" Now, poetry is addressed rather to the heart than to the head. It should not be like a metaphysical conundrum.

H.—I am sorry that you should be inclined to chime in with the extravagancies of the old Tory critics. According to Gifford, the predominating character of Shelley's poetry is "*its total want of meaning*," and the *London Literary Gazette* used to complain of Shelley's "*incurable absurdity*." In speaking of *Adonais*, the *Gazette* assured its readers that the poetry of it is "*con-*

temptible—a mere mass of bloated words, heaped on each other, without order, harmony, or meaning; the refuse of a school-boy's common-place book."

A.—Well—I should not be disposed to judge very harshly of these critics for their decision. Posterity will perhaps confirm it. I do not dispute the fact that Shelley was no ordinary man. His imagination was rich, and his sensibility extreme; but his intellectual powers were unequal and ill-balanced. His judgment was unsound, and he had not the artistical ability that is necessary to embody the spirit of poetry in a clear and definite form. A man may have a very large share of poetical feeling and yet want "the accomplishment of verse." The truest and best poetry is generally little more than the clear and definite expression of what other men have thought and felt (less strongly, perhaps, but not less truly,) and which they have yearned in vain to communicate to others. Shelley appears to me to have had much of the poet in his nature, without being a poet in the full sense of the word. There are men of fine feeling, fine fancy, and fine taste, who are alive to all the charms of the wide "world of eye and ear," and who naturally kindle into enthusiasm at the sight of the same scenes and objects which fascinate the poet and the painter, but who when they take up either the pen or the pencil are obliged to fling it away again in despair.

H.—You vex me by your injustice to a great poet. I ask you if there is not both art and inspiration in this stanza from the much-abused *Adonais?*—

> Midst others of less note, came one frail form,
> A phantom among men, companionless
> As the last cloud of an expiring storm,
> Whose thunder is its knell; he, as I guess,
> Had gazed on Nature's naked loveliness
> Acteon-like, and now he fled astray
> With feeble steps, o'er the world's wilderness,
> And his own thoughts, along that rugged way,
> Pursued, like raging hounds, their father and their prey.

Is not this stanza vigorous and pathetic—is it not also truly

artistical? Is this "the refuse of a schoolboy's common-place book"? And what say you to the noble ending of the poem?

> The breath whose might I have invoked in song
> Descends on me; my spirit's bark is driven
> Far from the shore, far from the trembling throng
> Whose sails were never to the tempest given;
> The massy earth and sphered skies are riven,
> I am borne darkly, fearfully, afar;
> Whilst burning through the inmost veil of Heaven,
> The soul of Adonais, like a star,
> Beacons from the abode where the Eternal are.

A.—These are fine verses, I readily admit, but they are associated with others that a man of better taste would hardly have written—or not have published.

H.—If you cannot or will not admire the pathetic *Stanzas written in dejection at Naples,* I shall be obliged to give up the attempt to convert you to my own way of thinking. Are not these golden words—sentiments profoundly affecting—images of surpassing beauty?

STANZAS.

Written in dejection at Naples.

I.

> The sun is warm, the sky is clear,
> The waves are dancing fast and bright,
> Blue isles and snowy mountains wear
> The purple noon's transparent light,
> Around its unexpanded buds;
> Like many a voice of one delight
> The winds, the birds, the ocean floods,
> *The city's voice itself is soft, like Solitude's.*

II.

> I see the deep's untrampled floor
> With green and purple sea-weed strown;
> I see the waves upon the shore,
> *Like light dissolved in star-showers, thrown;*

I sit upon the sands alone,
The lightning of the noontide ocean
Is flashing round me, and a tone
Arises from its measured motion,
How sweet did any heart now share in my emotion!

III.

Alas! I have nor hope nor health,
Nor peace within nor calm around,
Nor that content surpassing wealth
The sage in meditation found,
And walked with inward glory crown'd—
Nor fame, nor power, nor love, nor leisure,
Others there are whom these surround—
Smiling they live, and call life pleasure,
To me that cup has been dealt in another measure.

IV.

Yet now despair itself is mild,
E'en as the winds and waters are;
I could lie down like a tired child
And weep away this life of care
Which I have borne and yet must bear,
Till death like sleep might steal on me,
And I might feel in the warm air
My cheek grow cold and *hear the sea*
Breathe o'er my dying brain its last monotony!

V.

Some might lament that I were cold,
As I, when this sweet day is gone,
Which my lost heart, too soon grown old,
Insults with this untimely moan;
They might lament—*for I am one*
Whom men love not—and yet regret,
Unlike this day, which, when the sun
Shall in its stainless glory set,
Will linger, though enjoy'd, like joy in memory yet.

A.—There are fine *flashes* in this poem, but there is no steady light. There is evidently a line missing in the first stanza.

The whole of the last stanza is a specimen of Shelley's riddle-writing.

H.—I find no obscurity in the last stanza, but a great deal of pathos. The missing line after the fifth of the first stanza is supplied in Mrs. Shelley's first edition of her husband's works—

The breath of the moist air is light.

A.—A very bad line it is, too; moist air is generally heavy; but be that as it may, the poet is clearly a bad rhymester; a school-boy would deserve to be whipped for so gross a want of skill or care as is displayed in such rhymes as *light, light,* and de-*light* in one stanza. What is the meaning of

Around its unexpanded buds?

H.—I will leave you to solve your own difficulty. If I were to attempt to satisfy you with an explanation of one obscurity, you would discover a hundred others. But if you refuse justice to Shelley's intellectual character, I hope you will not join in the cry of the old Tory hounds against his moral name. That hideous cruelty I hope is over. Even the *Quarterly Review* and the *Literary Gazette* have felt *the late remorse of love.* Had this been earlier it had been kinder.

A.—I believe that Shelley's original nature was one of the sweetest and noblest in the world, though he fell into wretched mistakes by indulging in misty metaphysics— but they were errors of the head, not of the heart. It is impossible to read his letters to his wife and his friends without loving the writer.

H.—I was dipping the other day into the *Oxford University Magazine* for 1834, and, though its political tone is opposed to the advancing spirit of the age, and its religious principles are those of the High Church party, it has the liberality to praise Shelley highly, both as an author and a man. His opinions in politics and religion are severely and unequivocally condemned, but the individual is spared. The condemnation of his errors is accompanied with such a generous admission of the purity of his motives, and the real excellence of his heart, that most of the poet's admirers would probably read the article, not only

without offence, but with a strong disposition to return the moral compliment to the critic, who is evidently *a Christian* in the best sense of that much-abused distinction.

A.—It is said that amongst his other fine moral qualities, he had a most active and unaffected sympathy with the poor, towards whom he was always ready to act the part of a friend and benefactor. He did not confine his charity to pecuniary aid, but used constantly to visit and relieve the sick, for which particular purpose he had qualified himself by going the round of the London Hospitals. Leigh Hunt speaks of his "princely generosity to his friends," and Byron has paid more than one compliment to his personal character, which certainly was very superior to his own.

H.—And yet the Quarterly Reviewers could speak respectfully enough, and more in sorrow than in anger, of a deistical lord, "*the mightiest spirit of modern times,*" while poor Shelley, a truly gentle and graceful spirit, is treated as a blackguard or a fiend. "If," says Gifford, speaking of Shelley, "*we might withdraw the veil of private life, and tell what* WE KNOW ABOUT HIM, *it would indeed be a disgusting picture that we should exhibit,*" I have really no words at my command to express the horror with which I regard such *criticism* as this! But the passionate, the malignant, and unjust are sure to fall into inconsistencies, that nullify the effect of their abuse. They act like drunkards, and know not what they say. I have just quoted from the *Quarterly Review* of 1819. In returning to Shelley, the same periodical, still under the same editor (Gifford) says "*Of Mr. Shelley himself* WE KNOW NOTHING, *and desire to know nothing*."

A.—Thank God, this sort of criticism has gone by, and even in the *Quarterly*, and other Tory publications, we now meet with temperate and generous criticism on works of pure literature, without the least reference to the politics of the authors under notice. We have not time at present, or I should like to return to the subject of Shelley's poetry, and go through his *Cenci* with you, and I think I could prove, even to your conviction, that that Drama is in no respect fragmentary, unequal, or incomplete. Nor is it in the least degree metaphysical or obscure.

A.—But unfortunately the subject of it is a sad evidence of the writer's want of taste and judgment.

H.—Well—I shall read you a Sonnet of Shelley's, and then take my leave of him for the present. To my taste, it is one of the finest in the language—simple, complete, grand, and most suggestive—

OZYMANDIAS.

I met a traveller from an antique land,
Who said Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. Near them, on the sand,
Half-sunk, a shatter'd visage lies, whose frown,
And wrinkled lip and sneer of cold command,
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamp'd on these lifeless things,
The hand that mock'd them and the heart that fed;
And on the pedestal these words appear:
"My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
Look on my works, ye mighty, and despair!"
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare,
The lone and level sands stretch far away.

A.—I think if Keats had lived he would have been a far greater poet than Shelley. He was indeed a poet all over. His daily life breathed the atmosphere of poetry. His imagination was quite as rich as Shelley's, but was always more clear and definite, and under truer guidance; and, perhaps, of all the poets of the nineteenth century, he had the finest ear for the music of verse.

H.—I have no wish to say one word against poor Keats, whose melancholy fate will always increase the interest with which all lovers of true poetry now regard his genius; yet if you talk of Shelley's inequalities you must admit those of Keats.

A.—But Keats's inequalities were those of eager youth—of immature powers. Had he lived a little longer, he would have quite outgrown his early faults of style. His fervid, prodigal, and impetuous fancy would have been brought under some control, as his judgment ripened with his years. His mind was

evidently progressive. His fragment of *Hyperion* is gigantic—perfectly Miltonic. Let me close the evening with the production of a few of his priceless gems:

LOVERS PARTING.

Parting they seem to tread upon the air;
Twin roses by the zephyrs blown apart
Only to meet again more close, and share
The inward fragance of each other's heart.

A LOVER DISCOVERS HIS DROWNED MISTRESS.

Upon a dead thing's face my hand I laid;
I look'd — 'twas Scylla ————
———— Cold, O cold indeed,
Were her fair limbs, and *like a common weed*
The sea-swell took her hair.

THE MOON.

Innumerable mountains rise, and rise,
Ambitious for the hallowing of thine eyes;
And yet thy benediction passeth not
One obscure hiding place, one little spot
Where pleasure may be sent; *the nested wren*
Has thy fair face within its tranquil ken,
And from beneath a sheltering ivy leaf
Takes glimpses of thee.

THE MOON AGAIN.

Or by the moon lifting her silver rim
Above a cloud, and, with a gradual swim,
Coming into the blue with all her light.

THE ENTRANCE TO A NOBLE MANSION,

A pillar'd porch, with lofty portal door,
Where hung a silver lamp, whose phosphor glow
Reflected in the slabbed steps below
Mild as a star in water.

A QUIET SCENE.

————No stir of air was there,
Not so much life as on a summer's day,
Robs not one light seed from the feathered grass,
But where the dead leaf fell, there did it rest.

THE PAINTED WINDOW.

A casement high and triple-arch'd it was,
All garlanded with carven imageries
Of fruits and flowers, and bunches of knot-grass
And diamonded with panes of quaint device,
Innumerable of *stains and splendid dyes,*
As are the tiger-moth's deep-damasked wings;
And in the midst, *'mong thousand heraldries,*
And twilight saints, and dim emblazonings,
A shielded scutcheon blush'd with blood of queens and kings.

Full on this casement shone the wintry moon,
And threw warm gules on Madeline's fair breast,
As down she knelt for heaven's grace and boon;
Rose-bloom felt on her hands, together prest,
And on her silver cross soft amethyst,
And on her hair a glory like a saint;
She seemed a splendid angel, newly drest,
Save wings for Heaven.——

DAINTIES.

And still she slept an azure-lidded sleep,
In blanched linen, smooth and lavender'd,
While he from forth the closet brought a heap
Of candied apple, quince, and plum, and gourd;
With jellies soother than the creamy curd,
And lucent syrups, tinct with cinnamon;
Manna and dates, in argosy transferr'd
From Fez; and spiced dainties every one,
From silken Sarmacand to cedar'd Lebanon.

H.—All these are exquisite indeed—the very essence of genuine poetry. But as you have been so good as to give me this treat, I will not say good-night until I have read you a few similar specimens of Coleridge. He is a very unequal poet, but as true a one as ever lived. He has sometimes a stilted and sometimes a slovenly style. But in the whole range of British poetry there is nothing more tender, delicate, and refined than the little tale of *Genevieve*. It is "exceedingly beautiful."

A.—Coleridge was a wretched prose writer. His *Friend* is the most awkward and unintelligible prose that was ever written.

But he was a genuine poet, an original thinker, and a profound scholar.

H.—Well—take my specimens, and then we must positively say good-night—

A SHIP IN A DEAD CALM.

Day after day—day after day.
We stuck, nor breath nor motion:
As idle as a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean.

NIGHT-FALL.

The sun's rim dips; *the stars rush out*:
At one stride comes the dark;
With far-heard whisper, o'er the sea
Off shot the spectre-bark.

A MUSICAL BROOK.

A hidden brook
In the leafy month of June;
That to the sleeping woods all night
Singeth a quiet tune.

A MYSTICAL RIVER.

Five miles, meandering with a mazy motion,
Through wood and dale the sacred river ran,
Then reached the caverns measureless to man,
And sank in tumult to a lifeless ocean;
And mid this tumult Kubla heard from far
Ancestral voices prophesying war

GENEVIEVE.

She wept with pity and delight,
She blushed with love and virgin shame,
And, like the murmur of a dream,
I heard her breathe my name.

Her bosom heaved—she stept aside,
As conscious of my look she stept—
Then suddenly, with timorous eye,
She fled to me and wept.

She half enclosed me in her arms,
She pressed me with a meek embrace,
And, bending bach her head, looked up,
And gazed upon my face.

A NIGHTINGALE.

—Tis the merry nightingale,
That crowds and hurries and precipitates,
With fast thick warble, his delicious notes.

SOLITUDE.

O, wedding guest! this soul hath been
Alone on a wide wide sea,
So lonely 'twas, that God himself
Scarce seemed there to be.

A CALM.

There is not wind enough to twirl
The one red leaf, the last of his clan,
That dances, as often as dance it can.
Playing so light, and hanging so high,
On the top-most twig that looks up at the sky.

No. XXVI.

ANCIENT PHILOSOPHERS.

H.—No man who is acquainted with human nature looks any-where for perfection, except in the heroes of poems and romances. The wisest man amongst us presents many points of ridicule to an observant eye. Hence the old proverb, that familiarity breeds contempt. A too close and severe inspection of the best specimens of humanity inevitably leads to the discovery of a flaw. No man is a hero to his *valet de chambre*, or a sage to his familiar associ-ates. A prophet has no honor in his own country. There is some truth in these old saws. Contrary to the laws of perspective in the physical world, our moral or intellectual nature is magnified by distance, and dwarfed by proximity..

L.—Walter Scott's own family, it is said, used to wonder why the world so highly reverenced him, and could not suppress their acknowledgment that they thought him overrated. "What," said a smart young barrister to whom Thomas Campbell had been pointed out at a literary party,—"is that little fellow the author of the '*Battle of the Baltic?*'"

H.—There was a report in the newspapers, that the late Colonel Sir Walter Scott not only never read his father's novels, but would not admit them into his house. This report, however, was positively contradicted by a writer, who seemed to speak from a personal knowledge of the gentleman so calumniated.

L.—The disrespect for genius generally excited by too near an approach, or by too close a personal intimacy, is not so surprizing as the contrary error of an indiscriminate admiration of every thing that has been uttered by the intellectual idols of mankind, especially of those who are far removed from the reach of envy. Nothing can be more eggregiously absurd, than much of the conduct, and many of the maxims and observations, of the ancient sages of Greece and Rome, who have been regarded as oracles almost divine. I fell in the other day with a prettily-printed edition of a translation of the Lives of the Ancient Philosophers, attributed to Fenelon. The book seems intended for young persons, but anything more foolish than what is called the wisdom of the sages of old, I never met with. Let me point out a few specimens of their sagacity. Solon, though not generally averse to amusements, was shocked, we are told in this book, at theatrical performances, and after seeing Thespis one day act in a tragedy of his own composition, he asked the actor "*if he was not ashamed to utter so many falsities in the face of the world?*"

H.—Why, a school-boy ought to be whipped for so shallow a mistake, for a child, old enough to see that a picture is not Nature herself, but an imitation of Nature, would not call a representation of life on the stage, or on the canvass, a shameful lie.

L.—When Pisistratus had recourse to the stratagem of presenting himself wounded and bleeding to the people, the wise Solon swore that it was exclusively to be attributed to the

"foolish fictions" that he had condemned. Heraclitus, the weeping philosopher, insisted that the sun was no larger than it appeared to be, and yet the most ignorant numskull of his time, must have known enough of the laws of perspective to correct such a silly blunder. The philosopher must have seen, whenever he opened his eyes, that the objects presented to them were diminished by distance. This ancient sage, when he found himself afflicted with the dropsy, chose to speak to his physicians in enigmas, so that they could not penetrate his meaning, and, rather than condescend to explain himself in common language, he declined their aid, and buried himself in a dunghill, in order to evaporate, by its heat, the water which was the origin of his disease. Some writers say that he sunk so deep into the loathsome mass, that in his feeble condition he could not extricate himself, but was speedily suffocated; and that his dead body was devoured by the dogs. Was this the end of a wise man? Was this a philosopher to be venerated and followed? Should not we call one of our own contemporaries, were he to act in this manner, a mad-man or a fool?

H.—I think so.

L.—But the weeping philosopher, in his weaker hours, was not more ridiculous and contemptible than Democritus, the laugher. It is said that the latter was so devoted to study, that he deprived himself of sight, in order that he might not turn his attention to any other pursuit! The manner in which he accomplished his design, was by exposing a plate of burnished brass to the sun, the rays of which, being flashed from the brass mirror on his eyes, by degrees deprived him of vision!

H.—A mighty pleasant and effective way of facilitating study, to have "knowledge at one entrance quite shut out!"

L.—The end of Pythagoras was just as silly as that of Heraclitus. Being pursued by his enemies, he fled a considerable distance; but, arriving at a field of beans, certain peculiar notions of his regarding that vegetable, would not permit him to pass over it. "It is better," said he, "to die here, than to destroy all these poor beans."! He, therefore, awaited the foe, who

came up and slew him. The wiseacre who could act in this way, deserved his death.

H.—There is perhaps some allusion here respecting the beans that we do not quite understand. In the golden verses attributed to Pythagoras, he is made to say that a man might as well, for the wickedness of the thing, eat his own grand-mother as meddle with beans. Coleridge has been accused of plagiarism from a German by De Quincey, for his explanation of the reluctance of Pythagoras to injure beans. Beans, he says, were made use of in voting and balloting, and the philosopher speaks symbolically, meaning that all interference with electioneering or political intrigues are improper for a philosopher.

L.—Listen to this anecdote in the life of Empedocles. The Etesian, or periodical winds, blowing one day with the most awful violence, Empedocles gave orders that a number of asses should be flayed. He then caused bottles to be made of their skins, and placed on the tops of the mountains. The effect of this was, "*as it is said,*" a sudden calm! Did donkeyism ever go farther?

H.—It was Empedocles who, to be deemed a god, by his miraculous disappearance, secretly precipitated himself into the flames of mount Etna, but forgot to take care of his "iron pattens," one of which was thrown up again and recognized.

L.—Diogenes very frequently prayed to statues, and, on being asked the reason, replied, that it was to accustom himself to refusals.

H.—The marble's mute refusal is not analogous to the positive answer of a living creature. It is the disappointment of an expectation or desire that is hard to bear, but as nothing can be expected or desired from a statue, the praying to one could teach us nothing—nothing is looked for, and nothing is endured. Any one who had seen Diogenes thus praying to a stone, must have thought him, what he called the god-like Socrates,—a fool. But what could be expected from the self-willed tenant of a tub, who had the choice of a comfortable house? It is amusing enough to hear of Diogenes, who used always to maintain that wise men

wanted nothing, continually praying to statues, to accustom himself to refusals!

L.—Epicurus was wont, with becoming gravity, to explain to his disciples, that the soul is nothing more than a coat of matter, thinly (very thinly, indeed!) spread over the whole body.

H.—An Epicurean ought to take care how he uses a flesh brush too roughly, for he might chance to rub off his soul.

L.—Zeno, because he broke his finger, accidentally striking it against some object as he was coming out of his school, had the profound sagacity to take it for granted, that it was a sign that the gods were impatient for his company, and he, therefore, very coolly put an end to his existence, by strangling himself!

H.—It is a pity that the ancients did not understand the use of strait-jackets. Many of the lights of the world—the profound sages of antiquity, might then have had their useful lives prolonged against their own consent.

L.—It is surely time that the errors of wise men should cease to be confounded with their excellencies. I recollect no book, containing the lives and sentiments of the ancient philosophers, in which there is any attempt at discrimination. Boys at school get the wheat and the chaff together, and are not taught to distinguish the one from the other. I can hardly believe that this collection of the *Lives of the Ancient Philosophers* was published by the wise and pious Fenelon, though his name is on the title page.

No. XXVII.

QUOTATIONS FROM THE POETS ON THE SUBJECT OF DEATH.

C.—The greatest intellects have endeavoured in vain to grapple with the mighty and mysterious questions of life and death. All that could be thought and said on these subjects, is to be found in the pages of poets and philosophers; but to what does it amount?

S.—The two writers who have written best upon the subject of death are Montaigne and Lord Bacon. The former loved to dwell upon it, and eagerly read every account of a death-bed that he could lay his hand on. He quotes, with great approbation, the remark of Cicero, that "the study of Philosophy is nothing more or less than a man's preparation for his death."

C.—I recollect Montaigne's Essay well, and greatly admire it. He remarks that the premeditation of death is the premeditation of liberty; that he who has learned how to die, has forgot what it is to be a slave; and that there is no such thing as misery to him who rightly comprehends, that the being deprived of life is not an evil.

S.—Montaigne himself was always prepared for his closing scene. He tells us that he kept a memorandum-book, in which he used to put down his wishes respecting what he would have done for him by his friends, in case death should suddenly interrupt his plans. If he was only a league from his house, he put down in his book whatever came into his head, as he was not certain that he should live to get home. "I am prepared," he says, "at all hours for what may happen, and the approach of death will be no novelty to me. We should always, as far as possible, be booted and ready to depart."

C.—As Shakspeare says, "the readiness is all." Montaigne has a curious enigmatical phrase to express his preference for a sudden death to a painful and lingering one. He says, that "the deadest deaths are the best."

J.—I suppose he means that that death is the easiest which is unattended with the cares of this world, and an anxiety about surviving relatives and friends; when there is a perfect resignation and nothing to make us—

Cast one longing, lingering look behind.

C.—Voltaire observes that the Essays of Montaigne are more popular than those of Lord Bacon, but though the old Gascon is sensible and entertaining in a high degree, he is not to be compared, in my opinion, with Lord Bacon as a philosopher. He

was too much of a gossip. The latter, however, was anything but admirable as a man. While Montaigne was beloved and respected by all who knew him, Lord Bacon justly incurred the hatred of his contemporaries, for his attempt to murder the good name of his friend and benefactor, the unfortunate Lord Essex, after having assisted to lay his head upon the block.

J.—I believe few people will second Basil Montagu's defence of Lord Bacon's personal character, however much the world may admire his writings. Do you recollect Addison's tribute to his genius. He says that Lord Bacon had the sound, distinct, comprehensive knowledge of Aristotle, with all the beautiful lights, graces, and embellishments of Cicero.

C.—Bacon was a reader of Montaigne, whose Essays were published about sixteen or seventeen years before his own. He quotes him, I think, more than once. In Bacon there is nothing like plagiarism from Montaigne, but he has sometimes a train of thought that seems to have been suggested by him.

S.—Lord Bacon was perhaps often indebted to the ancients, but rarely, I think, to his contemporaries. On the other hand, it is certain that his contemporaries and successors have resorted to his pages as to a storehouse of wealth, and seem to have thought themselves entitled to dress themselves in his spoils. I have observed some of his noblest thoughts to pass like current coin from hand to hand, each succeeding possessor claiming a right of property. Lord Bacon has finely and justly remarked, that "there is no passion in the mind of man so weak, but it mates and masters the fear of death; and, therefore, death is no such terrible enemy, when a man hath so many attendants about him that can win the combat of him. Revenge triumphs over death; love slights it; honour aspireth to it,; grief flieth to it; fear pre-occupieth it;" &c. &c. This reflection is evidently echoed by Tucker, in his *Light of Nature Pursued.* "Yet," he says, "we do not find this abhorrenee of death universal; philosophy can overcome it, enabling the professor, like Socrates, to swallow the deadly potion as a cheerful glass among his friends; religion can despise it; ambition, fame, revenge, will stifle it,

disappointment, and any intolerable pressure, will outweigh it;" &c. &c.

C.—Seneca has said that by death we only cease to be what we were before, and he who has lived two years or two days has done that. I find the same sentiment in Montaigne and Bacon, and in almost all our moralists. Montaigne borrowed so freely from the ancients, that we never know when he is expressing his own thoughts.

S.—These sentiments are very just, but, as in the case of all great afflictions, moral axioms are often more true than useful. They are rarely of any service to the bereaved friend or parent or to the dying man.

> I weep the more, because I weep in vain.

It is easy to say that death is less to be feared than nothing, if there was any thing less than nothing; that it cannot in any way concern us, living or dead; not living, because we still exist: not dead, because we are no more;—but such things sound like the quibbles of a logician when death is staring us in the face. So again we do not weep at the lateness of our birth —we were dead when Shakspeare wrote his Plays and Pope his Satires—we shared not in the gaieties of "the merry Monarch" nor in the splendours of our "Virgin Queen,"—and our having been nothing in the eternity before our birth, excites neither horror nor regret—why then should we dread or repine at the eternity beyond the grave?

> What is there left in us for death to fear?
> When once that pause of life has come between,
> 'Tis just the same as we had never been.
>
> *Dryden's 3d Book of Lucretius.*

Perhaps we should dread life itself, if we were about to be re-born. But thoughts of this kind, however philosophical, will not alter the nature of the human heart. We care not for the past. Hope is our God. We live in the future. It seems terrible to think of pleasures that are to come, in which we shall never

join; that there will be merry summer parties in the country and cheerful firesides in town when we are rotting in the grave. It was a thought of this nature, that made Pope remark so pathetically, that the sun would shine just as brightly after he was gone. Montaigne's thought respecting our being nothing in the grave, reminds me of Sir Thomas More's strong expression applied to death—" the uncomfortable night of nothing."

J.—Do you recollect Shakspeare's phrase in one of his noble but neglected Sonnets—*Death's dateless night?*

C.—Dryden, in his translation of the third book of *Lucretius,* calls death *a long good-night*—

> The worst that can befall thee, measured right,
> Is a sound slumber, and *a long good-night.*

Perhaps Pope had this expression in his mind when he wrote that pathetic and beautiful farewell letter to Attersbury—commencing " Once more I write to you, as I promised, and this once, I fear, will be the last! The curtain will soon be drawn between my friend and me, and nothing left but to wish you *a long good night.*"

C.—Poor West, the friend of Grey and Walpole, in his pleasing verses *Ad amicos,* has borrowed some pathetic and natural thoughts from one of Pope's letters to Steele—" Youth, at the best," says Pope, "is but a betrayer of human life in a gentler and smoother manner than age; 'tis like a stream that nourishes a plant upon a bank, and causes it to flourish and blossom to the sight, but, at the same time, is undermining it at the root in secret."* * * * " When I reflect what an inconsiderable atom every single man is with respect to the whole creation, methinks 'tis a shame to be concerned at the removal of such a trivial animal as I am. The morning after my exit the sun will rise as bright as ever, the flowers smell as sweet, the plants spring as green, the world will proceed in its old course, people will laugh as heartily and marry as fast as they were used to do." Here are West's verses;

> Health is, at best, a vain, precarious, thing,
> And fine-faced youth is ever on the wing:

'Tis like a stream, beside whose watery bed
Some blooming plant exalts his flowery head;
Nursed by the wave, the spreading branches rise,
Shade all the ground, and flourish to the skies;
The waves the while beneath in secret flow
And undermine the hollow bank below;
Wide and more wide the waters urge their way,
Bare all the roots, and on their fibres prey.
Too late the plant bewails his foolish pride,
And sinks untimely in the whelming tide;
But why repine? Does life deserve a sigh?
Few will lament my loss whene'er I die.
————————Though this face be seen no more
The world will pass as cheerful as before.
Bright as before, the day-star will appear,
The fields as verdant, and the skies as clear.

Poor West died of consumption, when a very young man. It is melancholy to observe how often that fatal disease has checked the career of genius.

C.—Death has often been found to be less terrible, than it appears to be when viewed at a distance. It has been benignly provided that even the greatest cowards and the most ardent lovers of life, shall be prepared, by that gentle depression and langour produced by sickness, to look upon the near approach of death with resignation. There is a good passage in Massinger on this point—

Let such, whose happiness and heaven depend
Upon their present being, fear to part with,
A fort they cannot long hold; *mine to me is*
A charge that I am weary of, all defences
By pain and sickness battered.

J.—Death seems most terrible when we are rioting in health and pleasure, because it is then that it is most directly opposed to our sensations. "I perceive," says Montaigne, "that the longer a distemper holds me, I naturally contract a disgust for life. I find it more difficult to digest this resolution of dying when I am in health, than when I am sick of a fever."

C.—It is clear that it was from no weariness of life that Mon-

taigne thought so philosophically of death. He says that were it an enemy, from which a man could escape, he would advise him to put on the armour even of cowardice itself for that purpose. In one of Joanna Baillie's powerful plays there is a somewhat similar sentiment:

> I fear to die. And were it in my power,
> By suffering of the keenest racking pains,
> To keep upon me still these weeds of nature,
> I could such things endure, that thou would'st marvel,
> And cross thyself to see such coward bravery.
> For oh! it goes against the mind of man
> To be turned out from its warm, wonted, home,
> Ere yet one rent admits the winter chill.

Who can forget the fine lines in the second book of the *Paradise Lost?*

> To be no more; sad cure; for who would lose,
> Though full of pain, this intellectual being,
> Those thoughts that wander through eternity,
> To perish rather, swallowed up and lost
> In the wide womb of uncreated night,
> Devoid of sense and motion?

J.—Do you remember the lines in the best of Dryden's plays, *All for Love?*

> Oh! that I less could fear to lose this being!
> Which, like a snow-ball in my coward hand,
> The more 'tis grasped, the faster melts away.

Shakspeare speaks well on this point, as on all others—

> Cowards die many times before their deaths;
> The valiant never taste of death but once.
> Of all the wonders that I yet have heard,
> It seems to me most strange that men should fear,
> Seeing that death, a necessary end,
> Will come, when it will come.

> That life is better life, past fearing death,
> Than that which lives to fear.

O, our lives' sweetness!
That, with the pai[illegible] death, we'd hourly die,
Rather than die at once.

The weariest and most loathed worldly life
That age, ache, penury and imprisonment
Can lay on nature, is a paradise,
To what we fear of *death.*

Addison, in his tragedy of *Cato,* has two or three good passages, and this is amongst them—

Thus o'er the dying lamp the unsteady flame
Hangs quivering on the point, leaps off by fits,
And falls again, as loth to quit its hold.

The clinging to life, even when it is wretched, is very naturally painted in Lord Byron's *Cain*—

I live,
But live to die: and, living, see no thing
To make death hateful, save an innate clinging,
A loathsome, and yet all invincible
Instinct of life, which I abhor, as I
Despise myself, yet cannot overcome—
And so I live.

There is another passage in his *Don Juan* to the same effect—

A sleep without dreams after a rough day
Of toil, is what we covet most; and yet
How clay shrinks back from more quiescent clay.

Salvoni (as is recorded in *Spence's Anecdotes*) just as he was dying, cried out, in a great passion, "I will not die, I will not die, that's flat." Bulwer, in his eloquent *Conversations with an Ambitious Student in Ill Health,* gives a striking account of a strong-built lawyer, who when informed by his physician that his disease was mortal, would scarcely believe it possible, and seemed resolved to defy the dreadful conqueror of all mankind. When Sir Godfrey Kneller was dying, Pope sat at his bed-side, and endeavored to soothe his impatient thoughts, by telling him that he would no doubt go to a better place; "Ah! my good friend, Mr. Pope," said he, "I wish God would let me stay at Whitton."

I am not fond of Dryden's rhyming plays, but they have often good lines in them. There are three couplets in his *Aurengzebe* which are in keeping with the quotations already given from other authors.

> I wish to die, yet dare not death endure;
> Detest the medicine, yet desire the cure.
> Oh! that I'd courage but to meet my fate;
> That short, dark, passage to a future state;
> That melancholy riddle of a death,
> That something, or that nothing, after death.

It is thus, as some one has well observed, that we make life uneasy by thinking of death, and death uneasy by thinking of life.

C.—Pope did not think lightly of Dryden as a Dramatic writer. He said that there were many fine things in his plays. He considered the three best of them to be *All for Love, Sebastian* and *The Spanish Friar*.

S.—We were just now talking of the freedom with which Lord Bacon's thoughts have been repeated by succeeding authors. This liberty is not confined to the prose writers. Poets have turned his poetry in prose, into poetry in verse. Bacon in his *Essay on Death* says.—"Groans, and convulsions, and a discolored face, and friends weeping, and blacks and obsequies, and the like, show death terrible." I am not aware that Lee's transplantation of this into his *Lucius Junius Brutus* has ever been pointed out—

> Death is not dreadful to a mind resolved;
> It seems as natural as to be born.
> Groans, and convulsions, and discolored faces;
> Friends weeping round us, blacks and obsequies,
> Make death a dreadful thing."
>
> *Cosmo.*

C.—I have found Lord Bacon's remark that "Death opens the gate of fame, and shuts the gate of envy after it," in the pages both of Burton and of Sterne. Sterne, no doubt, took it with other good things, from the *Anatomy of Melancholy*.

J.—The Thracians wept when a child was born, and rejoiced when a man died. The Greeks had a skeleton present at their meals, to familiarize them with the thoughts of death, but the Africans have such a horror of it, that they make it a capital crime to mention it in the hearing of their kings.

C.—This puts me in mind of Doctor Johnson's extreme anger and agitation whenever Boswell alluded to the subject. When Johnson was told that Hume (whose death-bed was serene) had said that he was no more uneasy to think that he should not be after this life, than that he had not been before he began to exist, he replied, that if Hume really did think so, his perceptions were disturbed, he was *mad*; but that if he did not think so, he *lied*.

J.—The Doctor was especially pleased with a remark of General Paoli's that it is impossible not to be afraid of death; and those who, at the time of dying, are not afraid, are not thinking of death but of applause, or something else, which keeps death out of their sight. When it was represented to Johnson, on another occasion, that a person who was formerly gloomy and afraid of death, had brought himself to think of his dissolution without any perturbation, Johnson maintained that it was only a disordered imagination taking a different turn.

S.—Sir William Temple has remarked, that it is difficult to love life and yet be willing to part with it.

J.—I recollect being highly amused with the exquisite absurdity of Boswell, who expresses his distress at the thought of not reading Shakspeare's poetry in the other world. It reminds me of a remark once made by Northcote to a tasteless ignoramus, who was violently extolling Raphael's paintings; "If there were nothing in them," said he, "but what you see, the name of Raphael would have been long ago forgotten." Boswell tells us that a lady relieved his anxiety on the subject of Shakspeare's poetry, by observing that the first thing that he would perhaps meet with in the other world, would be an elegant copy of the Plays:—printed and bound, I suppose, by angelic printers and book-binders! He adds, with a richly characteristic *naivéte*, that Dr. Johnson, who was present, smiled *benignantly!* and did not

appear to disapprove the notion! What would poor Boswell have thought of the *Eclectic* Re●wer's abuse of the Prince of Dramatic writers. He speaks of "the *poisonous fumes*" which Shakspeare has "spread over the hearts of his countrymen. Thousands of unhappy spirits, and thousands yet to increase the number," he says, "will everlastingly look back, with unutterable anguish, on the nights and days in which the plays of Shakspeare administered to their guilty delights."

S.—The Mahommedans have made their paradise popular and attractive by giving it a human interest. The dreams of the Elysian fields were enough to make the ancients in love with death.

C.—The Christian Religion does not address itself to carnal desires. Have you observed that the human corpse has generally an aspect of solemn serenity—almost of pleasure—and that there is not that peculiar air of happiness in the appearance of dead animals? "A human corpse seems," says Leigh Hunt, "as if it suddenly knew every thing, and was profoundly at peace in consequence."

J.—I could never look upon a dead human body without horror. How strange it is that we should find it so difficult to get rid of the fancy that the dead can feel. We look upon the dissection of a dead human body with sympathetic pain.

C.—And yet we cut up the dead body of a chicken or a lamb without the slightest compunction. Though the extinction of life is dreadful to think of, few would wish to live for ever. What can be more melancholy than the story of the Wandering Jew? An immortal man would be an inexpressibly forlorn and hopeless being. To be compelled to endure all the ills which flesh is heir to without a prospect of release, would be a terrible condition—

> Death is the privilege of human nature:
> And life without it were not worth our taking:
> Thither the poor, the prisoner, the mourner,
> Fly for relief, and lay their burdens down.
>
> *Rowe.*

S.—If an individual were to believe that he alone of all men was doomed to die, his destiny would seem truly awful. It is a kind of melancholy comfort that there are so many to keep us company. A thousand die every hour. And what are the living compared in number to those whom Byron calls the "under-earth inhabitants."

C.—So long as we are prepared for it, it matters not when death comes. I have been present at many death-beds, and have found that the task of preparation is generally much easier than it is supposed to be. Even Doctor Johnson, of whose "coward horror of death" Miss Seward speaks with such emphatic surprise, at last died with resignation, and learned to look upon it, to use his own expression, as

Kind nature's signal of retreat.

J.—We must not fancy that people who express their wish to die are always in earnest. Mrs. Piozzi's *Three Warnings* is a very good satire upon idle complainers, who pretend to sigh for death. There is a good old story given in Lord Kames's *Art of Thinking* that is much to the purpose. An old man, fatigued with a burden of sticks, threw it down peevishly, calling upon Death to deliver him from a miserable life. Death came presently, in his wonted ghastly form, desiring to know the gentleman's commands: "Only, good sir, that you' ll do me the favour to help me on with my burden again!" The "King of the Beggars," who is pushed through the streets of London on a board, as he has neither arms nor legs, clings as fondly to life as any monarch in the world.

S.—Perhaps if we really knew the nature of the change we should be too impatient of life—

Has heaven hid the happiness of death
That man may dare to live?

Dryden.

C.—At all events the trial is brief. Young says truly that "death arrived, is past." And Garth, in his *Dispensary*, expresses the same sentiment more poetically.

To die is landing on some silent shore,
Where billows never break, nor tempests roar.
Ere well we feel the friendly stroke, 'tis o'er.

S.—There is a poem, with a pedantic title (*Thanotopsis*) by one of the best of the American poets—William Cullen Bryant,—which contains some fine thoughts on the subject of our present conversation. Its close is particularly pleasing—

So live, that when thy summons comes to join
The innumerable caravan, that moves
To the pale realms of shade, where each shall take
His chamber in the silent halls of death,
Thou go not like the quarry slave at night,
Scourged to his dungeon, but, sustained and soothed
By an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave,
Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch
About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams.

J.—How differently do the same men look on death under different circumstances. Pelopidas, who was the bravest of the brave in the field of battle, betrayed a cowardly depression when cited before his judges, on the capital charge of having retained his post of General four months beyond the time limited by law. He surprised every one by his dread of death. Sir Astley Cooper used to tell a story of a general officer, who had often faced the cannon's mouth, dropping down in terror, when informed that his disease was rapid and fatal. The brave Marshall Biron is said to have disgraced his exit with "womanish tears and raging imbecility."

C.—There is no doubt that many men have sincerely and passionately called for death when suffering actual agony. I have read, in Labaume's *Campaign in Russia*, an account of a French soldier, who was so dreadfully wounded, that, suffering intolerable torments without the slightest chance of recovering, he most piteously called upon his fellow soldiers, as they passed him in file, one after the other, to put him out of his horrible agonies with a musket ball. Several, shocked at his condition, lifted their muskets to their shoulders, with the intention of

complying with the poor wretch's entreaty, but lowered them again, from an inability to muster up sufficient resolution to shoot their own countryman. At last one man, more merciful or more firm than the rest, shot him through the head. You may recollect the end of the Emperor Adrian. He was seized with such excruciating pains that he found them utterly insupportable, and vehemently desired his attendants to dispatch him. He frequently cried out " How miserable a thing it is to seek death, and not to find it!" He engaged a man, partly by threats and partly by entreaties, to promise to kill him; but the man, instead of obeying, consulted his safety by flight. So that, says Goldsmith, he who was master of the lives of millions was not able to dispose of his own.

S.—Literary men have often died nobly, and sometimes in a very characteristic way, in the midst of their favorite pursuits. Sir Thomas More did not forego his love of a good jest even when mounting the scaffold. "I pray you see me safe up, and, for my coming down, let me shift for myself." Every body remembers the close of Sir Walter Raleigh's death and the verses that he wrote the night before. Rousseau, when dying, ordered his attendants to place him before the window, that he might once more behold the setting sun, and take his farewell of the earth. Petrarch was found dead in his library, with his head upon a book. Barthelemy was reading Horace when, his hands becoming cold, he dropped the book, his head inclined to one side, and he seemed to sleep. But his nephew discovered that he was dead. Bayle died while correcting the proof sheet of his *Philosophical Dictionary*. Waller died repeating some lines of Virgil. Keats, as he was dying, was asked how he felt. "Better, my friend," said he " I feel the daisies growing over me."

C.—Most of these cases of deaths of literary men are collected, I think, by D'Israeli in his *Curiosities of Literature*. Literary men are the only "immortal mortals." The best part of Homer still lives. His spirit converses as freely with this generation as it did with his own. Milton knew that he had left behind him " those thoughts that wander through eternity."

J.—I think we have talked long enough upon our melancholy subject. Permit me to close the conversation with an anecdote of old Wycherley. When he felt himself dying, he sent for his young wife, and told her that he had a last request to make to her, which was, that she would not again marry an old man!

No. XXVIII.

THE NEW TIMON.

H.—Who is the author of the *New Timon*—a poem published by Colburn, and of which so many reviews have appeared in the papers lately?

A.—Why that is a question which I am unable to answer with certainty; but I am inclined to attribute it to Robert Montgomery.

H.—What, the author of *Luther, Satan, The Omnipresence of the Deity*, and other poems on religious subjects?

A.—The same. He is sometimes called *Satan* Montgomery.

H.—Why, I thought the reverend gentleman never wrote on any subjects that might not be regarded as strictly professional.

A.—The poems that he puts his name to are all of the kind you speak of: but recollect that this production is anonymous. Perhaps, you are not aware that he is the author of a long satirical poem, also published anonymously, entitled the *Age Reviewed.*

H.—I never read the poem—indeed I never heard of it—is it good for any thing?

A.—It exhibits a sort of clap-trap apparent cleverness, but there is no real pith or point in it. It has an air of strength from the excessive coarseness of the abusive epithets. Anything more essentially vulgar, I think, I never had the bad fortune to meet with in English Literature. There is scarcely an eminent name unconnected with Toryism and High Church principles that is not foully libelled in this malignant satire.

H.—You surprize me. Are you certain that the *Age Reviewed* was Robert Montgomery's production.

A.—*Certain*—and could prove it—though I am not sure that he ever avowed his claim to it publicly. But I know that he offered it after the first edition to a publisher in London. Now, there are a great many lines in the *New Timon* that resemble the style and tone of the most successful passages in the *Age Reviewed*, though increased experience and skill in the art of composition, and a maturer mind, have enabled the writer to produce a work infinitely superior in its general character to his early satire.

H.—But the *New Timon* is not a *satire* at all.

A.—If it be not a satire, it has, at all events, many satirical passages, and is written in the same heroic couplet measure as the *Age Reviewed*, and has a touch of the same mannerism. The ridicule of Alfred Tennyson in the *New Timon* is precisely in the style of the early satire, written, if I remember rightly, when Montgomery had only just passed his one-and-twentieth year.

H.—Oh, if he wrote the satire at that early age, we should make allowances for its defects.

A.—I should say that charity might allow it to pass quietly into eternal oblivion, if the boy had not been father of the man—if the poet in his middle age had not repeated the sins of his early life. It is true that the foaming abuse of the satire is not seen in his later and graver performances, but they display the same illiberality and the same virulence towards all who differ from him in politics or religion. To me there seems an obvious insincerity in his poems on religious subjects. He treats the Deity with an awful familiarity. He seems to regard the Creator of the universe only as a good subject for sonorous verse—a sort of literary speculation. The unspeakable mystery and majesty of God never daunt him. He appears to think only of the popularity and profit of sacred rhymes. Thus

> Fools rush in where angels fear to tread.

It is an awful thing to make a trade of the attributes of the Deity.

H.—Are you not uncharitable and unfair in your judgment? What right have you to question the sincerity of the poet?

A.—I think any tolerable judge of poetry can tell when an author is sincere and when not. Every one can see at a glance, for example, that Cowper's love of God and Nature is sincere—that his "raptures" are "genuine," and not "conjured up for occasions of poetic pomp." Every one can see that Robert Burns, a poet of a different character, and whose themes were less sacred, was not less *sincere* than Cowper. He wrote from his own warm heart, and thus he electrifies the hearts of others. There is an indescribable sort of internal evidence in all poetry that lets the reader into the secret of the writer's feelings.

H.—I should be more ready to found a decided opinion upon that internal evidence when it is in a writer's favor than when it is against him; for a mistake on the unfavorable side is a cruel injustice.

A.—But with respect to Robert Montgomery there is not only the internal evidence I speak of; but that want of Christian charity and kindness in his judgments on others, which confirms the appearances of insincerity in those professions of extraordinary piety, which are attended with so many vulgar artifices of style.

H.—Well—to put aside this branch of our discussion, let me know what you think of the *New Timon* as a poem.

A.—It is clever—but it will hardly live a twelvemonth. The story is poor and ill developed. The hero, the *New Timon*, is a rich *East Indian*, who is represented to be as moody and as savage as Byron's *Corsair*. If the author had ever seen anything of the East Indians of Calcutta, he would hardly have painted his hero in such strange colors. There is great fluency of verse, and sometimes the reader meets with a vigorous line; but, upon the whole, it is stilted and *buckramed*. There is a false emphasis in the tone, and a monotony in the rhythm. The mob of readers would not perhaps perceive that there is no natural spring or vibration in the metre, and would be apt to mistake a sort of convulsive grasping at effect, for the movement of real strength;

but critics, accustomed to look more closely, and judge more accurately, would hardly be so deceived. It is with readers of poetry, as it is with the ordinary observers of pictures—very few can distinguish the easy touch of true genius and genuine inspiration, from the painful elaborations of less gifted natures.

H.—I do not know that,—I am inclined to think that the public are, after all, the best judges of poetry.

A.—Not in the first instance; except in rare cases. Generally speaking, the critic has to direct the judgment of the many. Addison opened the eyes of the English people to the merits of their greatest Epic poet, and Wordsworth and Coleridge have been forced into notice by the critics. It is true that the critic could not always keep a poet from oblivion. After a certain time if the public do not continue to recognize and appreciate a poet's genius, he sinks into obscurity, in despite of all the fostering of favorable criticism. What has become of the "matchless Orinda" whom Dryden so extravagantly praised?—Who reads Hayley—though few writers have received more compliments from contemporary critics?

H.—The revolutions in the public taste are marvellous.

A.—I suspect we are in the habit of confounding the praises of critics with the public favor. There are very few instances indeed of poets, who have once fairly obtained a place in the public heart, and then sunk into neglect. Homer and Virgil have more admirers than ever, and who can imagine for a moment that the merits of Milton and Shakspeare will ever lose their attraction?

H.—To return to the *New Timon*—do you remember any of its passages that remind you of the *Age Reviewed?*

A.—I recollect but little of it—but a single line occurs to me

> Though Peel with pudding plump the puling Muse.

Now this absurd specimen of alliteration is precisely in the style of a great number of lines in the long satire of the *Age Reviewed.* I have not seen that satire for years, but I remember one line of it—

> And push a poem up Parnassus' hill.

There is the same extraordinary fondness for alliteration, and the same weak convulsive efforts to be strong, in this poem as in the satire : but still, as a whole, the present poem is very superior indeed to its predecessor. If the *New Timon* be really, as I think it is, the production of Robert Montgomery, his mind has certainly not stood still.

H.—I am told that he is an eloquent preacher, and much admired and beloved by his congregation. He is evidently not an ordinary writer. On the contrary, he is distinguished by great literary enthusiasm, and, though rather deficient in taste and judgment, there are passages scattered here and there over his works, that prove him to possess poetical genius, though the kind and degree of it has perhaps never been very fairly explained by our periodical writers. He has been extravagantly overpraised, and just as extravagantly abused and ridiculed. The extraordinary sale of his works is partly, I suppose, to be attributed to their religious character, though James Montgomery's poems, for which there is a less urgent demand in the book market, are quite as full of Christian sentiment.

A.—A great deal more so—*James* writes with more taste, more elegance, and more precision, and the air of genuine piety in all he writes, is unmistakeable. He never handles sacred subjects irreverently.

H.—Nor does *Robert*—at least with *intentional* irreverence ; though I confess I do not like his style of allusion to the Almighty, in his poem of the *Omnipresence of the Deity*—but that was a very juvenile work, and his later works indicate, I think, a deeper and truer religious feeling.

No. XXIX.

AUTOGRAPHIC LETTERS OF EMINENT MEN.

L.—You promised me some time ago to let me see your collection of autographs. The hand-writing often indicates the mind. "I want," said Shenstone, "to see Mrs. Jago's hand-writing, that I may judge of her temper."*

R.—I shall have great pleasure in showing them, but it will be impossible for you to read them all, in a single evening. * * * Here is an interesting specimen of Lord Nelson's caligraphy.

Bath, Jan. 29th, 1798.

My Dear Lloyd,

There is nothing you can desire me to do that I shall not have the greatest pleasure in complying with, for I am sure you can never possess a thought that is not most strictly honorable. I was much flattered by the Marquis's kind notice of me, and I beg you will make my respects acceptable to him. Tell him that I possess his place in Mrs. Palmer's Box, but his Lordship did not tell me all its charms—that generally some of the handsomest ladies at Bath are partakers in the Box, and was I a batchelor, I would not answer for being tempted; but as I am possessed of every thing which is valuable in a wife, I have no occasion to think beyond a pretty face.† I am sorry the King is so poor: had he been worth what those vile dogs of Opposition think, what a vast sum would have been given to the nation; but I now hope all the nation will subscribe liberally. You will believe that I do not urge others to give, and to withhold myself, but my mode of subscribing will be novel in its manner, and by doing it I mean to debar myself of many comforts to serve my country, and I expect great consolation every time I cut a slice of salt beef instead of mutton. The *Vanguard* will be at Sheerness next Saturday, and, if this wind holds, she will be at

* Lavater's notion of hand-writing is by no means chimerical, nor was General Paoli fanciful, when he told Mr. Northcote that he had decided on the character and disposition of a man, from his letter and the handwriting.—*D'Israeli's Curiosities of Literature.*

† Nelson was married to Mrs. Nisbit, March 11th, 1787.

Portsmouth before Thompson quits the Channel. I only pray that the French may not be ready to leave Brest. I have been in a fever ever since the *Boadicea's* return, with the account of their being ready for sea. Lady Nelson and my Father thank you for your kind remembrance of them, and believe me, my dear Lloyd,

Yours most affectionately,

HORATIO NELSON.

To Thomas Lloyd, Esq.
No. 15, May's Buildings,
St. Martin's Lane, London.

L.—You might see at once, that this was written by a left-handed man. All the letters lean the wrong way, but with considerable regularity, and they are well formed and perfectly distinct.

R.—Nelson was not only left-handed, but left-eyed. At the seige of Calvi a shot struck the ground near him, and drove the sand into his right eye. He lost his right arm in the unsuccessful attack on the town and fort of Santa Cruz, (Teneriffe) about a year before he wrote this letter, and about six months after it was written he fought the glorious battle of the Nile.

L.—He says in this letter that he was possessed of a charm against temptation—"*every thing which is valuable in a wife.*" What a pity that a change should ever have come over the spirit of that dream! He had not then felt the magic of the "Hamiltonian system."*

R.—I suppose we must excuse Nelson's compliment to the patriots of his day—*those vile dogs of opposition.* A British

* "To write letters to you" (writes Nelson to his wife before he married her) "is the next greatest pleasure I feel to receiving them from you. What I experience when I read such as I am sure are the pure sentiments of your heart, my poor pen cannot express:—nor, indeed, would I give much for any pen or head which could express feelings of that kind. Absent from you I feel no pleasure; it is you who are every thing to me. Without you I care not for this world; for I have found lately, nothing in it but vexation and trouble. These are my present sentiments. God Almighty grant they may never change, nor do I think they will. Indeed there is, as far as human knowledge can judge, a moral certainty that they cannot; for it must be a real affection that brings us together, not interest or compulsion."

officer is not expected to make a distinction between his sovereign and his country. Loyalty with him is patriotism, and covers a multitude of sins. If Nelson loved his King, he gave pretty substantial proof that he loved his country also—that he was not really indifferent to *the people*, for whose interests "those vile dogs of opposition" struggled so fiercely.

L.—In the energy of his heroic speeches, Nelson sometimes reminds one of Napoleon; but the cry of "*Westminster Abbey or Victory*," and the famous telegraphic signal of "*England expects every man to do his duty*," are in somewhat better taste than the Ossian-like grandiloquence of Napoleon's appeals to his troops. Both these great leaders, however, knew the sort of men whom they addressed, and were equally successful in touching the right chord.

R.—Here are two companion notes, or notelets, from Pitt and Fox. Insignificant as they may seem from their extreme brevity, they are not without some marks of the character of the writers. Pitt's is in a stiff formal hand—that of Fox is bolder and freer, and the matter is amusingly simple—

Downing-street, Saturday, Nov. 18.

Mr. Pitt presents his compliments to the Earl of Moira, and will be happy to have the honor of seeing his Lordship, any time before twelve, or after two, to-day, that may be most convenient to him.

Chertsey, April 29, 1802.

DEAR SIR,

Pray let me have a line to know this comes safe. I expect the Cow to-night.

Yours ever,

C. J. FOX.

Thursday,

Frederick Walsh, Esq.

Fludyer-street, Westminster.

Now comes a letter from Mr. Perceval, (Chancellor of the Exchequer) who, less than a year after the date of it, was shot by Bellingham, in the lobby of the House of Commons. Bellingham was a Liverpool ship-broker, who had sustained some heavy

losses, and suffered ill-treatment, in his commercial intercourse with Russia. He considered that the British Government was bound to procure him some redress. His memorials being disregarded, it came into his head that he was justified in taking the life of some member of the administration. There was a report that he mistook Perceval for Lord Levison Gower, who had been Ambassador to the Court of St. Petersburgh—

Downing-street, June 2, 1811.

My Lord,

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your Lordship's letter on the subject of what passed between his Royal Highness, the Prince Regent, and myself, upon the occasion of my mentioning to him the death of Lord Melville, and the consequent vacancy in the office of Lord Privy Seal of Scotland.

I am truly sensible of the condescension and kindness which induced His Royal Highness to mention my suggestion upon the subject of your Lordship; although if His Royal Highness could, consistently with his generous and affectionate feelings towards His Royal Father, have acted upon it, I should have endeavoured to avoid appearing as the author of it; I should have been desirous that His Royal Highness should have laid his command upon me, directing the appointment, as the more it appeared to be His Royal Highness's act, the more chance I should have conceived there would have been of your Lordship's accepting it. When I state that I should have endeavoured to avoid appearing as the author of the suggestion, I beg to assure your Lordship that such endeavour would not have proceeded from any personal disrespect to your Lordsbip, or any backwardness to have executed such a command, but sincerely desirous that the appointment should have taken place, because I believed it would have been more gratifying to His Royal Highness to have availed himself of an opportunity to mark his kindness and regard for your Lordship, I should have feared, from the difference which unfortunately subsists between your Lordship and His Royal Highness's confidential servants, your Lordship might have been disinclined to accept it if the suggestion had appeared to have originated with any one of them—or if the grant of the office had been presented to your Lordship as an act which could have put you under the slightest obligation to them.

Upon the truly noble and filial motives which induce His Royal Highness to forbear from filling up any appointment of the nature of that in question, there cannot be two opinions; these motives cannot but command respect, wherever they are known, although I lament that His Royal

Highness should have felt it necessary to apply them in this instance, which I should have hoped might have fairly formed an exception to them.

I have the honor to be,
Your Lordship's most obdt. & faithful servt,
SP. PERCEVAL.

To the Earl of Moira.

L.—This is a capital specimen of a thoroughly ministerial epistle;—cautious, circuitous, and complimentary.

R.—Mr. Jerdan, the editor of the *London Literary Gazette*, was standing close to the minister, when he received the bullet in his heart. Poor Perceval exclaimed "Oh God!" and dropped down dead upon the spot. Mr. Jerdan seized the assassin, and soon afterwards published a very interesting account of him.*

L.—The hand-writing of this letter is clear, neat, and easy.

R.—Here is a very little note from a very great man. The hand-writing is still more clear, neat, and easy than that of Perceval, but with a look of more strength. Did you ever see a letter of introduction more laconically authoritative and decisive than this republican's to a "friend?"

Philadelphia, Oct. 20, 1792.

MR. WHITING,

If the Hon'ble Mr. Cushing, (who is the bearer of this letter,) one of the Judges of the Supreme Court of the United States, should call at Mount Vernon, you will treat him with all the civility in your power.

I am, your friend, &c.
G. WASHINGTON.

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* "Bellingham," writes Mr. Jerdan, "with his breast exposed, and now extremely perturbed, was in a state of great excitation, when General Gascoyne appeared, and recognized him as a man whom he knew, from having seen him at Liverpool. No words, indeed, can picture his frightful agitation; large drops of agonizing sweat ran down his pallid face, and from the bottom of his chest to his gorge, rose and fell a spasmodic action as if a body as large as a hand were choking him with every breath. Never on earth, I believe, was seen a more terrible example of overwrought suffering; yet in language, he was perfectly cool and collected." On his trial, his counsel suggested the plea of insanity, but it was overruled. At his execution, his manner was firm and composed, and he refused to express any contrition for his crime.

Here is a letter from Lord Kenyon, who, in 1788, succeeded Lord Mansfield as Chief Justice of the Court of King's Bench. I think I never met with a more illegible scrawl. It would take you an hour to decypher it; I must read it to you.—

SIR,

It is impossible to read your letter without feeling for your situation. I do not know who are the magistrates who ought to remedy the abuse you complain of. If I did I would apply to them. What is intended to be the contents of your petition to the House of Peers I do not know, and therefore may not undertake at all to support it. If it be a proper petition, and tends to correct grievances in prisons, I will support it.

I am, Sir,

Your Obedient Servant,

KENYON.

To Mr. John Hatfield, in the Prison,
Scarborough, 25th Nov. 1796.

L.—I wonder if the unfortunate prisoner could read this letter. This John Hatfield was the man, I suppose, who shot at George the Third.

R.—I thought so myself at first, but it occurred to me a few days ago that I might as well verify the fact—when I soon discovered my mistake. It is curious enough that there was a John Hatfield executed for forgery at Carlisle, on Sept. 3, 1803. Kenyon's letter, you see, is dated 1796.

L.—It may have been the same man. Perhaps he escaped punishment in the 18th century only to be hung in the 19th.

R.—The John Hatfield hung for forgery in 1803 was a notorious impostor, who, by deep fraud, beguiled into marriage with him the far famed *Beauty of Buttermere*. The man of the name of Hatfield—his Christian name I have not met with—who fired at George III. in Drury Lane Theatre May 11th, 1800, was tried for the offence and saved from a sentence of death by a plea of lunacy, but was condemned to confinement for life. He died in 1841, at the age of 69. His majesty was fired at twice on the same day; in St. James' Park in the morning, and in Drury Lane Theatre in the evening. His Majesty was also fired at from an air gun in the year before the date of Lord Kenyon's

letter, but, though a thousand pounds was offered for the discovery of the traitor, I do not think any man was ever convicted of the crime.——

R.—A son of Burns, then *Captain* James Glencairn Burns, now a *Major*, I think, placed in my hands these letters of his father. The hand-writing you see is bold and manly. The first you will observe is addressed to Anthony Dunlop, Esq. a son of Mrs. Dunlop, of Dunlop. Enclosed in the letter is the autograph copy alluded to of the preface to Holy Willie's Prayer. The letter addressed to James Armour is of peculiar and touching interest, as it was written not many days before the poet's death. It evinces a generous anxiety about his gentle partner, when he himself was suffering from what proved to be a fatal illness. It closes with a melancholy and too true foreboding of his own fate—

Anthony Dunlop, Esq. at Dowager Lady
Wallace's, George Street.

SIR,

Inclosed you have Holy Willie, and much good may he do you. I have prefixed a small preface, like a lamp stuck before a Presbyterian Pulpit to throw light not on the subject, that is commonly *light-proof*, but on the speaker:

I wish you a happy voyage, and all the success an honest man can enjoy.

Get wealth and power, if possible with grace
If not; I wish you neither wealth nor place.

These, Sir, are my *wishes;* from my inmost soul I would *pray* for you too; but I like to oblige every man his own way.

I am,
Sir,
Your very Humble Servant,
ROBERT BURNS.

St. James' Square, Wed. Morn.

PREFACE TO HOLY WILLIE'S PRAYER.

And send the godly in a pet to pray.—*Pope.*

Argument.

Gavin Hamilton was what the world calls a good moral man, but a stranger to "*effectual calling,*" or "the new birth;" so, was very properly sum-

moned before Kirk Session, by the Rev. William Auld, a worthy trumpeter of the Lord, for his irregularities of walk and conversation. The affair went to the Presbetery, where the uncircumsized Philistines overran the people of G——, another priest of the Lord and Holy Willie, the Lord's servant, were put to shame and derided by the children of Belial. Holy Willie had been called to the Presbytery Elder; and his righteous spirit being grieved at the triumph of the wicked ones, he prayed unto the Lord saying:—

LETTER FROM BURNS TO HIS FATHER-IN-LAW.

To Mr. James Armour, Mason, Mauchline.

For Heaven's sake, and as you value the welfare of your daughter and my wife, do, my dearest Sir, write to Fife, to Mrs. Armour, to come if possible my wife thinks she can yet reckon upon a fortnight. The medical people order me, *as I value my existence*, to fly to sea-bathing and country quarters, so it is ten thousand chances to one that I shall not be within a dozen miles of her, when her hour comes. What a situation for her, poor girl, without a single friend by her in such a serious moment.—I have now been a week at salt water, and though I think I have got some good by it, yet I have some secret fears that this business will be dangerous if not fatal.

R. BURNS.

Poor Burns! his wife was delivered of a boy, while his own corpse was lying in state in the Town Hall of Dumfries! When I was in Edinburgh, in 1828, I had the pleasure to dine in company with the poet's widow, at the house of Mr. Ritchie, at that time editor of the *Scotsman*. She was then in good health and spirits, but soon after I heard that she became less vigorous.

The venerable widow, (once the "bonnie Jeanie Armour") died in the early part of the year 1834. She was buried in her husband's grave. The poet's body was exposed to view at the time of his widow's interment, and his countenance was in a state of singular preservation. How inexpressibly interesting a sight!

The "son of Burns" (what a proud title!) so delighted me with the taste and feeling with which on one occasion, he sang some of his father's songs, that I addressed him the following sonnet. He deserved a better one, but he received it very kindly and was much pleased, he said, with the two concluding lines.

TO CAPTAIN JAMES GLENCAIRN BURNS.

How dream-like is the voice of native song,
Heard on a foreign shore! The wanderer's ear
Drinks wild enchantment! Swiftly fade the drear
And cold realities that round him throng;
While sweet home-sounds the pleasant trance prolong,
The past is present and the distant near.
Such song is sacred ever—doubly dear
When heard by patriot exiles parted long
From all that love hath hallowed. But a spell
E'en yet more holy breathes in every note
Now trembling on my heart. *A proud Son sings*
The lay of Burns! Oh! what imaginings
Awake, as o'er a foreign region float
These filial echoes of the father's shell.

L.—Well, I have read worse sonnets than that, and—*better*.

R.—The next letter I shall produce is from John Thelwall, "the patriot." It is in a clear unaffected hand-writing. There is nothing remarkable in the contents.

June 12, 1827.

DEAR SIR,

I was favored yesterday with a copy of the *London Weekly Review*, which I looked through with the greater pleasure in consequence of having learned in conversation with a literary friend on the preceding evening, that the undertaking was yours. If I had known this earlier, I should have presumed upon former correspondence to have made an open tender of my services—it being my wish to extend at present my literary connection with respectable periodicals, especially in the critical and poetical departments.

I am quitting just now my residence in Pall Mall, East, but if any assistance of mine can be acceptable to your undertaking, you will oblige me by the favor of a line addressed to

Your humble servant,

J. THELWALL.

D. L. Richardson, Esq.

L.—I recollect something of this Thelwall. Lamb asks Coleridge in one of his letters—"*Is the patriot come yet?*" "I was looking out," he adds, "for John Thelwall all the way from Bridge-water, and had I met him, I think it would have moved me

almost to tears." "John Thelwall," said Coleridge, "had something very good about him. We were once sitting in a beautiful recess in the Quantocks, when I said to him, 'Citizen John, this is a fine place to talk treason in!' 'Nay, Citizen Samuel,' replied he, 'it is rather a place to make a man forget that there is any necessity for treason.'"*

R.—When the French revolution broke out, Thelwall and Horne Tooke were the leading orators of the political debating clubs. They were sent to the Tower and tried for high treason; but were both acquitted. The trial excited a prodigious sensation at the time. A few days before it took place, Thelwall told Mr. Erskine, his Counsel, that it was his intention to defend his own cause. "*If you do,*" said Erskine, "*you will be hanged.*"—"*Then I'll be hanged if I do,*" was Thelwall's answer. Thelwall is the author of a vast number of pamphlets, on all sorts of subjects. He and Charles Lamb were ridiculed for their poetry, in the same number of the *Edinburgh Review* in the year 1803. Thelwall published an angry answer, but Lamb, with more wisdom, held his tongue. No prudent author will attempt a reply to mere ridicule. "Who," said some one, in reference to Gibbon's attacks on Christianity,—"Who can refute a sneer?"

The next letter is in a fine, bold, manly hand. It is from the Right Honorable John Borlase Warren (Rear Admiral of the

* Coleridge in a letter to Joseph Cottle, thus speaks of Thelwall;—"John Thelwall is a warm-hearted honest man; and disagreeing as we do, on almost every point of religion, of morals, of politics and philosophy, we like each other uncommonly well. He is a great favorite with Sara (Mrs. Coleridge). Energetic activity of mind and of heart, is his great feature. He is prompt to conceive and still prompter to execute; but I think him deficient in that patience of mind which can look intensely and frequently at the same subject He believes and disbelieves with impassioned confidence. I wish to see him doubting and doubting. He is intrepid, eloquent and honest. Perhaps the only acting democrat that *is* honest, for the patriots are ragged cattle; a most execrable herd; arrogant, because they are ignorant, and boastful of the strength of reason, because they have never tried it enough, to know its weakness."

Blue.) The envelope is lost, and there are no means of knowing with certainty to what nobleman it is addressed—

Foudroyant, at sea, June 6, 1846.

MY DEAR LORD,

A cutter has this day brought me orders, that may eventually occasion my remaining in the West Indies, in the event of finding the French in those seas; and although it may be a very flattering circumstance to have the command there, yet a continuance of that climate after the month of September, would not either agree with my health or my private concerns and connections in England; and, after the services it has been my good fortune to render my country, it is a sacrifice which cannot reasonably be expected of me. I do therefore trust that you will have the goodness to obtain permission for me to return home, whenever I may find it convenient after September. I had flattered myself with hopes that the station off Madeira and the Canaries would have been still allowed me; but I rely upon your friendship, to explain these points to Lord Howick, that I may not be kept in that abominable climate *against my inclination.*

I have the honor to be,
With sincere regard, my dear Lord,
Your affectionate & humble servt.
JOHN BORLASE WARREN.

L.—Warren, I believe, received the thanks of both houses of Parliament, for capturing a large French squadron in 1798. After the peace of Amiens he was made a Privy Councillor and was also sent out as ambassador extraordinary and minister plenipotentrary to St. Petersburgh. He is said to have been the author of a work entitled *A View of the Naval Force of Great Britain.*

R.—The letter I now produce is from Sir James Mackintosh, written in England, after his return from Bombay. The handwriting is neat and legible, but rather stiff—

Dulwich, 14*th March*, 1813.

MY DEAR LORD,

I enclose the notes to Mr. Forbes and to Mr. Rich at Bagdad, which I mentioned to your Lordship. If Mr. Forbes should remain for some time at Bagdad to acquire Arabic, I may venture to say that he will find Rich a very accomplished and interesting young man, well acquainted with the

languages and literature of Europe, and surpassed by very few in Oriental attainments.

I have received a very gracious communication from the Regent in a kind note from Macmahon. You will not wonder that I am impatient to secure so great a treasure, and I venture to request that your Lordship would hint to Macmahon the importance of early access. I should be most happy to assist His Royal Highness's Librarian in arranging the papers.

Pardon me for again mentioning the names of Lord Winchelsea, Lord Spencer, and Lord Bathurst. My excuse is that when you are gone, I lose my chief stay.

I am, my dear Lord,
Most faithfully yours,
J. MACKINTOSH.

To the Earl of Moira.

R.—Charles Lamb's hand-writing is the most miserable school-boy scratch, that you perhaps ever met with from the pen of a grown man. Look, too, at the awkward folding of this letter. Was there not something irregular and boyish in him to the last, in spite of his exquisite genius and subtlety of intellect?

DEAR ——

I am vexed to say that Mrs. —— has invited a female friend to stuff up our house, who stays over Monday, so that we have not a sofa to offer your good sister. Emma has been in like manner put off from Mrs. Wm.'s a week, the house being visitor-full. We came to town to see her off on Monday, but had business in the city, which prevented my calling upon you.

I thought to have seen you some day, this or last week, here, but have no business that requires it before Sunday week, when perhaps you will arrange to come with R——, who has partly promised. I sent you a boyish letter. Did you have it? Thank you for the colliers, which are industrious, but heavy.

Yours ever,
CHARLES LAMB.

L.—There is a comical letter of Lamb's to Miss Hutchinson, (in the collection edited by Talfourd,) in which he good naturedly ridicules his sister's hand-writing, and jestingly lauds his own. "Her figures," he says, "1, 2, 3, 4, &c. are not figures, but figurantes; and the combined posse go staggering up and down shameless as drunkards in the day-time. Her very blots are

not bold like this," (here he inserts a large blot) "but poor smears, half left in and half scratched out, with another smear in their place. I like a clean letter: a bold, free hand and a fearless flourish." I do not pretend to quote Lamb's words with exactness. I suppose it was his consciousness of writing such a mean, awkward, boyish hand, that made him alive to the humour of finding fault with the want of freedom in his sister's writing. But look at some of these letters of Wordsworth. The hand-writing is still worse than Lamb's. Observe this one, in particular. What a fearful scrawl!

SIR, *Keswick, 20th September*, 1825.

I received your elegant volume,* the accompanying miscellanea, and obliging letter, just before my setting off for this place, and, agreeable to your wish, I lose no time in assuring you of the arrival of the parcel.

I had not time to do more than cast my eye over your volume, which contains, I perceive, several pieces upon India, which I had previously read with much pleasure in the newspapers. Not doubting that I shall find many others as interesting when I return to the volume,

I remain, Sir,

Your obliged servant,

WM. WORDSWORTH.†

D. L. Richardson, Esq.
Howrah Cottage, Camberwell.

James Montgomery's hand-writing is more distinct than Wordsworth's, but it is sprawling and inelegant. This note, you see, was written more than twenty years ago—

FROM JAMES MONTGOMERY, ESQ.

Sheffield, January, 14, 1825.

DEAR SIR,

Your little volume‡ duly arrived. I have been so unwell of late that

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* Sonnets and other Poems, published in London, in 1825.

† In a letter to the same address, dated 19th August 1837, Wordsworth says—" Be assured it gave me great satisfaction to learn, that any thing of mine interests your Hindu pupils; and every English author must be insensible indeed, if the thought of the vast audience which is opening upon him in the East and the West, and all parts of the world, does not animate him to do the best he can in his vocation."

‡ Sonnets and other Poems.

I have been obliged to avoid all correspondence which I could. It has, therefore, not been acknowledged so early as it deserved. I had before received a copy, from your publisher, I presume, and given an extract in the *Iris*. I make it a rule never to write criticisms beyond a line or two in recommendation of any work in that newspaper, because applications are so frequent for such articles, that I must refuse all or none. Paragraphs, purporting to be reviews, sometimes do appear, but when you are a more experienced author, you will know that these are mere advertisements, furnished by the publishers and paid for. I will take an opportunity of offering my readers a further specimen of your Oriental gems, many of which would grace the bow of *Iris* herself, were she yet a goddess.

I am, respectfully, your friend and servant,

J. MONTGOMERY.

D. L. Richardson, Esq.
Howrah Cottage, Park St., Camberwell, London.

Here is a note from Leigh Hunt:—

Kensington, June 28, 1845.

DEAR SIR,

Pray accept my cordial thanks for the honor you have done my verses, and the pleasure you have given my heart, in your kind and eloquent notice of me on Tuesday week.

Yours, truly obliged,

LEIGH HUNT.

To the Editor of the Jersey Times.

L.—I suppose Hunt did not then know that the editor of the *Jersey Times* was an old friend of his.

R.—I have a number of very kind and beautiful letters from Leigh Hunt by me, but this one, brief as it is, is sufficient for the purpose of showing you his hand-writing, and how grateful he is for very trifling favors. When an author, like Leigh Hunt, so lauded by the first critics of the time, thinks it necessary to thank a provincial editor for an honest notice of his works, it proves the simplicity, warmth, and kindness of his nature. You will observe that Hunt's hand-writing is very like Southey's. Lamb said that Hunt's was so much the same as Southey's, that he had opened more than one letter from the author of *Rimini* not doubting it was from the Laureate.—Here is one of Southey's letters. The penmanship is really elegant:

Keswick, 29th December, 1827.

MY DEAR SIR,

I have not been deceived in counting upon your good offices. The books are, I believe, few in number, but they are of intrinsic value, and have also a value as being the gift of their author, Bilderdyk, one of the best and wisest men whom it has ever been my good fortune to know. They will therefore be worth much more to me than their charges, even with the *rent* added. Therefore I shall be very much obliged to your house, if they will take them out of the house of bondage, and forward them by waggon.

Verbeyet told me he would send off his package (which will be a large one) by a letter, which would be about the end of last month. He who has been accustomed to send large consignments to your house, will, no doubt, despatch this in the proper way, but it is very possible that he may give me no further notice. I think it may be expected any day to arrive from Antwerp, where it would be shipped. Right glad shall I be, to hear that they are on the canal, and still more glad to see them on my shelves, within reach for perusal and reference.

Your message shall be given to Mr. Wordsworth, when I see him, or more probably conveyed to him through my eldest daughter, before that time, for they are now both in Herefordshire.

Thanking you most sincerely, once more, for the trouble which you have, with so much cheerful good nature, taken for me,

I remain, My dear Sir,

Yours very truly,

ROBERT SOUTHEY.

To E. Moxon, Esq.

I have some letters of Macaulay's that are quite as easy and almost as elegant in the hand-writing as Hunt's and Southey's. Observe this brief note, on my sending him a copy of the periodicals I was then conducting, and soliciting contributions:

Government House, September 30, 1834.

DEAR SIR,

I have not found time to do more than look into the books which you have had the kindness to send. What I have read, however, has pleased me much. I do not know whether I have been fortunate in dipping in the *Literary Gazette*, but, from the passages which struck my eye, I should be inclined to say that it is better conducted than any periodical work of the same class in London. I am truly obliged to you for these volumes.

As to the *Bengal Annual*, I fear I can promise you no assistance. I

should indeed be most happy to serve the cause of literature in India: nor have I any scruples about my office. I owe that office,—I owed my introduction to public life,—to my pen; and it would be the most preposterous vanity if I were to consider literary pursuits as beneath the dignity of a station to which literary pursuits alone have raised me. But I have promised Professor Napier an article for the *Edinburgh Review* on Sir James Mackintosh's historical fragment. I am very impatient to perform my engagement; and it is with difficulty that I can find ten minutes in the day for that purpose. Till this work is off my hands—and when that will be I am quite unable to say—I cannot venture to promise you any thing, however short or trifling.

I remain,
Dear Sir,
Your faithful servant,
T. B. Macaulay.

To Capt. D. L. Richardson.

L.—I am glad to see Macaulay so manfully and generously acknowledging his debt to literature.

R.—Here are notelets from the Howitts. Though very brief and containing nothing of importance they are interesting from their Quaker peculiarities. The hand-writing in both is neat, but not otherwise remarkable:

Nottingham, 10*th mo.* 12*th*, 1827.

Respected Friend,

We have to thank thee, and our friend *Delta*, for the favourable notice of our volume which appeared in the '*London Weekly Review.*' As to furnishing an occasional contribution to that work, I may say that our good will is not wanting, but I am a man of business. Literature is to us merely a luxury, a relaxation, and I am jealous of permitting it to become anything more. For this reason, I have been under the necessity of declining various flattering solicitations from the periodicals, the few engagements of that nature which we already have being more than we can well meet. We however wish the work every success, and if we can at any time, transmit you something, we shall have pleasure in so doing.

I am, very respectfully, thy friend,
W. Howitt.

P. S.—If the Sonnet on the other side will suit your poet's corner, it is very much at your service.

D. L. Richardson, Esq.

Nottingham, 1 *mo.* 10*th*, 1828.

ESTEEMED FRIEND,

My husband having mentioned that I intended to send something for the columns of the *Weekly Review*, I now inclose the accompanying, which I hope will meet thy acceptance.

Robert Millhouse has seen the notice of his little volume in the *Weekly R view*; he is much obliged for its insertion. I believe it has already been serviceable to the sale of the work.

I shall thank thee to send a copy of the *Weekly Review* when the little articles of mine are inserted.

With best wishes for the success of thy literary undertaking,

I am, thy friend,
MARY HOWITT.

D. L. Richardson, Esq.

I must now introduce you to Dana, the well-known American poet. His countrymen are yet divided in opinion with respect to the rival claims of Dana and Bryant to the throne of American poetry. Dana has more force and originality—Bryant more delicacy and grace.

DEAR SIR,

After my having suffered so very long a time to go by, before answering your letter, you will hardly believe what satisfaction your kind present gave me.* . . . . In being thus particular, I do no more than common courtesy demands, aside from what I owe you for the pleasure your "*Leaves*" have given me. They have also much interested my friends, among whom I must mention Mr. Allston, the artist, of whom you have probably heard.†

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* A passage is here omitted.

† Allston is one of the best of the American painters, and is the oldest of their living poets. His poem of the *Sylphs of the Seasons* is full of imagination and its *picturesque* effects perhaps could only have been produced by one, who, to the general powers of the Poet, adds the taste and skill of an Artist. Dana, in another letter, observes—"I wish you could visit us—if it were only in so far as concerns yourself—to see Allston. I once told him of a dream that I had about Coleridge, in which, though perfectly conscious of his great intellect, it was love towards him that filled me: 'So,' said Mr. Allston, 'it would have been, had you actually seen him.' And such is the effect of the personal presence of Allston upon all who are worthy of knowing him." * * * "Mr. Bryant and I are old friends—we passed three or four weeks together this summer." Coleridge had a great esteem for Allston. Cooper, in his *England, by an American*, gives a curious anecdote res-

As I have nothing new of my own, allow me to send you a small volume, by my elder son—*Two Years before the Mast.* I send you a copy of the London Edition, the American publishers having printed a very coarse one. Favourable notices, I see, have appeared in some of the London periodicals.

From having overlooked the beginning of the Departure, Mr. Fonblanque is puzzled to find a reason for my son's undertaking the voyage. While my son was in College, his eyes were left in such a state by the measles, that he was unable to look into a book. Growing no better, he made up his mind to try the effect of the most laborious kind of life at sea, saying, if any thing could cure him *that* would, and that if it failed, it would, at least, be a preparative for a life of action. He has entirely recovered.—He knew perfectly well what he was about. My *Buccaneer** had no more to

pecting one of Allston's paintings. "Seeing a beautifully coloured little picture in the room, I rose to take a nearer view of it, when Mr. Coleridge told me it was by his friend Allston. It was a group of horsemen, returning from the chase; the centre of the light being a beautiful gray horse. Mr. Allston had found this horse in some picture of Titian's, and copied it for a study; but, on Mr. Coleridge's admiring it greatly, he had painted in two or three figures, with another horse or two, so as to tell a story and presented it to his friend. Of this little work, Mr. Coleridge told the following singular anecdote:—A picture dealer of great skill in his calling, was in the habit of visiting the poet. One day this person entered, and his eye fell on the picture for the first time. 'As I live!' he exclaimed, 'a real Titian.' Mr. Coleridge was then eagerly questioned, as to where he had found the jewel, how long he had owned it, and by what means it came into his possession? Suddenly the man paused, looked intently at the picture, *turned his back towards it, as if to neutralize the effect of sight,* and, raising his hand, so as to feel the surface over his shoulder, he burst out into an ecstacy of astonishment. 'It has not been painted twenty years.'"

* Dana's *Buccaneer* is a very powerful and highly imaginative production. The opening stanzas present a fine description of island scenery:

> The island lies nine leagues away,
> Along its solitary shore,
> Of craggy rock and sandy bay
> No sound but ocean's roar—
> Save where the bold wild sea bird makes her home,
> Her shrill cry coming through the sparkling foam.
>
> But when the light winds lie at rest,
> And on the glassy, heaving, sea,
> *The black duck, with her glossy breast,*
> *Sits swinging silently;*
> How beautiful! no ripples break the reach,
> *And silvery waves go noiseless up the beach.*

do with the affair (though so conjectured by a London editor) than had the Blind Highland Boy's expedition in the Washtub:—I say Washtub: for as to the long story of the big shell brought all the way over sea, we none of us *believe* a word of that, with all Mr. Wordsworth's pains to make us. I have been somewhat garrulous, but I thought that if the book interested you, you might like very well to know a little more than that told you about the writer.

Notwithstanding my procrastination, I hope that you will write me soon, should it be but a few lines. I should be glad to learn that you have received this, and how to direct to you a copy of my second edition of Poems and Prose Writings, whenever I publish it. With many thanks for your kind attention,

Dear Sir, yours,

RICHARD H. DANA.

Boston, U. S. America, May 11th, 1841.

Capt. D. L. Richardson, Calcutta.

I have a large collection of interesting and valuable letters, from eminent living authors, in reserve, some of them very long ones, but I will not weary you with them just now. Besides, many of them are rather too private and domestic to be exhibited even to you. Those I have now shown you reveal no secrets, and are so purely literary, that they might be published to the whole world, without the least fear of offence to those who penned them, accustomed as they are to see themselves in print. Perhaps you may like to cast your eye over a few of the bundle of small notes from bards who were applied to by the Editor of *Selections from the British Poets,* for their permission to insert specimens of their poetry, in a second edition of that work, the new Copyright Act rendering it necessary for Editors of selections to obtain the consent of the proprietors for making extracts from unexpired copyrights:

THOMAS MOORE.

Sloperton, January 3, 1845.

MY DEAR SIR,

Having been absent some days from home I have but just received your letter. It would have given me much pleasure (on *every* account) to be able to assist your publication. But, alas! it has never been in my power

to keep a single one of my copyrights. The persons you must apply to are Messrs. Power and Co. 22, Buckingham-street, Strand, and the Longmans; you may tell them from me, with perfect truth, that it would gratify me much to see my name connected with such a work as yours, but I fear much that the chances of your success with them are few and doubtful.

I am, dear Sir, yours truly,

To D. L. Richardson, Esq. THOMAS MOORE.

Greenfield House Jersey.

SAMUEL ROGERS.

January 18, 1845.

SIR,

You are very welcome to make extracts in moderation from my poems.

Yours truly,

To D. L. Richardson, Esq. S. ROGERS.

ALFRED TENNYSON.

10, *St. James's Square, Cheltenham,*
Feb. 8, 1845.

MY DEAR SIR,

I am sorry to see the date of your letter (10th January.) It is many a long year since I lived at Beech Hill in Essex, and your letter has reached me here, I scarcely know how. I shall write to Moxon by this post to send you my two volumes, and I trust that your work will prosper, as it ought to do, if it be even half as interesting as your *Literary Leaves*. I hope that you are getting up your health in Jersey, though I have heard that it is a rheumatic place.

Ever yours truly,

A. TENNYSON.

D. L. Richardson, Esq. Jersey.

JAMES MONTGOMERY.

The Mount, Sheffield, Jany. 28, 1845.

DEAR SIR,

You are exceedingly welcome to introduce a few specimens of my poetry into your intended volume of Selections. Wishing you the success which your known talents and approved taste convince me you will well deserve.

I am, truly, your friend and servant,

J. MONTGOMERY.

D. L. Richardson Esq.
Greenfield House, St. Heliers, Jersey.

LEIGH HUNT.

Kennington, Jany. 14.

MY DEAR RICHARDSON,

* * * What need I say to the Selections from my verses? You may always do with them and with me what you please. * * * * * *

Pray never think me, whether talking or mute, as any thing but

Your ever obliged and affectionate friend,

LEIGH HUNT,

D. L. Richardson, Esq.
Greenfield House, St. Heliers, Jersey.

SERJEANT TALFOURD.

Serjeant's Inn, London, 14*th Jan.* 1845.

MY DEAR SIR,

In reply to your letter of the 10th instant, which I have just received, I beg to assure you that you are at perfect liberty to make any use of my published works you think fit, and that I shall feel much honored by that which you propose respecting them.

I am afraid I have to ask your pardon for a very strange neglect;—you were so kind as to send me from India a copy of a very delightful work of yours, for which I have not yet thanked you. It arrived while I was on one of my long circuits; the letter attending it was mislaid; when I wished to reply to it I could not find the address; and the hurry and whirl of business shut it out too long from my thoughts. I am glad, however, to believe, from your late communication, that you have forgiven this very blameable inattention and will allow me to subscribe myself,

My dear Sir, very truly yours,

T. N. TALFOURD.

D. L. Richardson, Esq.
Greenfield House, Jersey.

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.

Bath, Feb. 18.

MY DEAR SIR,

Well knowing your discernment, and fearing only your partiality, I am far from any objection to your wishes. Indeed, I can desire no higher honor, in the present or any future age, than you are about to confer on me. Had I received the book you sent me from India,* I should instantly have expressed my gratitude. Perhaps no man is to be quite believed who ex-

* Mr. Landor received the book soon after this letter was written. See page 130.

presses a contempt for his own poetry, but I swear to you I should not feel a single pang if all mine were lost irrecoverably. My invention and energy,—the two main props of poetry, and *both* of which belong to no poet of our days excepting Keats,—are to be found in my prose only, if indeed there, but there I imagine them to be. Possibly you may not have met with my later attempts at verse. There is an Idyl printed about a year ago in *Blackwood* at the end (if I remember), of an Imaginary Conversation between Southey and Porson; and I believe another, a sort of sequel, will appear in *Hood's* next Magazine. Mr. Ward informs me that this extraordinary and admirable writer is dying, and expresses a wish for the little assistance I can give him. I devoted ten entire hours to transcribing a thing—which I hope may do.

Believe me, my dear Sir, very sincerely yours,

W. S. Landor.

D. L. Richardson, Esq. Jersey.

JOANNA BAILLIE.

Hampstead, Jan. 14, 1845.

Dear Sir,

I have had the honor of receiving your letter with a request for permission to insert in your next edition of "*Selections from the British Poets,*" some extracts from my Miscellaneous pieces, which I readily grant. I shall send as you desire a spare copy of my "*Fugitive verses,*" and you may choose from them what you like best. I am sorry to learn that bad health has been the cause of your return from India; I hope the mild air of Jersey has entirely restored you, and wishing you all the good wishes of the season and success to your present undertaking, of which there can be little doubt from the very great approbation your former edition has attracted,

I remain, dear Sir, very sincerely yours,

J. Baillie.

D. L. Richardson, Esq. Jersey.

L.—Moore's hand-writing is neat, but rather too minute. Tennyson's might take its place beside Leigh Hunt's or Southey's. Talfourd's has nothing peculiar about it. Joanna Baillie's is masculine, and Landor's is wild and wilful, as if he scorned the writing-master, and took a pleasure in setting all his rules at defiance.

No. XXX.

ANGLO-INDIAN SOCIETY.

J.—I do not wonder at Lord ———'s contempt for mankind. His strong sagacity must have easily penetrated the designs and disguises of sycophants and intriguers. Men in power have fine opportunities for the study of human nature. Sir Robert Walpole used to say that he knew the price of every patriot in the House of Commons.

C.—I do not deny that persons in high station with an extensive patronage at their disposal, must be shocked with examples of meanness and hypocrisy; but do they not also see more instances of great merit than men in private life? Individuals of extraordinary talent and information, and even of extraordinary disinterestedness, of genuine patriotism and heroic courage, are often brought into personal contact with the legislators of a large country. If the man in power sees more servility and baseness, he also sees more intellect and energy and perhaps more virtue than are usually met with in the narrow circle of domestic life. His scene is more diversified with lights and shadows.

J.—But the shadows greatly predominate over the lights. The scene upon the whole is gloomy enough.

C.—I do not think so;—they who are best acquainted with mankind, and can take the widest views, have generally the most favorable opinion of human nature. It is your shallow smart observer—your acute but not wise worldling—who is most suspicious of human virtue.

S.—Just so. People who judge of mankind from some peculiar point of view or from their own limited personal knowledge of certain classes (as is the case with lawyers and party politicians) form partial and erroneous judgments. They are like certain painters who represent not general or abstract na-

ture, but local or accidental peculiarities. Rembrandt, though not a bad painter, but, on the contrary, a very fine one, in his way, yet had his powers contracted, from having been born and bred in a mill, which admitted only one peculiar light, by which alone he studied. A student of the moral world may have been exposed to a similar accident; he may have been born and bred where all the light was in one direction.

J.—I think "the sternest painters" are "the best." Swift and Rochefoucault saw more of the innermost springs of the human heart than such fanciful optimists as Lamb and Hunt, whose speculations are pleasing poetry, but indifferent philosophy. I always liked Hazlitt better than either of the two latter writers, because he was "a good hater," had a keen sense of the folly and baseness of the world, and an understanding too healthy and vigorous to indulge in Utopian dreams of human perfectibility. How noble is the hearty satire of Dryden! How delicate and true the irony of Pope! The heavy flail of Churchill thickens the air with chaff. Even the pious and gentle Cowper could evince upon certain occasions "the strong antipathy of good to bad." Did not these men read human nature better than Hunt and Lamb?

S.—By no means. Dryden, Pope, and Churchill knew *society* better than Lamb and Hunt, but they did not know *human nature* half so well. As to Cowper, with all his personal amiabilities, his naturally acute and observant mind was narrowed by a gloomy sectarianism. The sweet-souled Shakspeare knew more of human nature than all other authors put together, and yet what truthful and charming portraits of humanity he has given us!

C.—Religious sectarians can never be regarded as fair judges of human nature. Who would estimate the character of mankind by the judgment of a rigid Calvinist? His imagination is diseased; all his feelings are morbid. He hates wickedness a great deal more than he loves goodness. He *hunts* a criminal. He takes a keen pleasure in the pursuit and capture. He is proud to be in at the death and dissection. He would be out of his element if he were not in a sporting country.

S.—I love Leigh Hunt for his "*humanities*" —— they are quite genuine, though he is perhaps too fond of ringing that favorite word in our ears. It would be a glorious world to all, could all men look upon it in the light that he does.

J.—Oh, what can a closet-student like Hunt know of human life ? It is true that he has resided long in the greatest city in the world, but he has lived in solitude in the midst of mighty crowds.

S.—Men who live in comparative solitude are generally better observers than those who mix with the busy throng. A spectator sees more of a battle than the combatants, and can judge of it better. Men of the world act much and think little, men in retirement act little and think much. If the retired thinker has fewer objects for study, than the man of the world, he has more leisure for calm and concentrated observation and reflection. It is not essential to a dramatist's success that he should have been a busy actor himself on the great stage of the world. Sensitive, studious, silent observers seem to see through the mere man of the world by a sort of intuition, and often amuse themselves with reading the secrets of his heart, while he is regarding them with pity and contempt, for their apparently childish ignorance and simplicity.

C.—What do you think, S——, of British Indian Society ?

S.—It is vastly inferior to society in England.

C.—Well, I confess this used to be my own opinion before I revisited my native land after an absence of a quarter of a century. I then found that human nature is human nature in the streets of London as it is in those of Calcutta, and that the wide difference which I was accustomed to see between an Englishman in India and an Englishman at home was all illusion.

S.—You are mistaken in regarding it as an illusion. It was no such thing—

> Manners with fortunes, humours turn with climes,
> Tenets with books, and principles with times.

Though the general groundwork or original character of an

individual remain the same, it may be so modified by circumstance as to be amiable or repulsive accordingly, in spite of the first bent, whatever that may have been. What I complain of in this society is a sort of cordiality of manner without a corresponding cordiality of heart. We are all very intimate and familiar with each other, but there is little or no friendship. When gentlemen here have met two or three times they address each other by their surnames, as if they had been acquainted for half a century; but if they were wishing each other good-bye for ever, there would be no more emotion between them than if it were for a separation of an hour.

C.—There is some truth in what you say on this point, but how can it be otherwise when every one knows every one? Is it not extravagant to expect that a man should have a thousand and one *friends*, and feel equally for all. Are *friends* so very plentiful even in England?

S.—No;—but there strangers of a day do not put on the aspect of old friends. No disappointment is experienced. In England an acquaintance of years will continue to commence his epistles with a freezing but honest *Sir*. It is this reserve which gives such a zest and value to expressions of a warmer nature.

C.—I believe that there are quite as many true friends to be obtained in India as in England—perhaps more, but I confess that the fashion of universal familiarity renders it more difficult to distinguish them. In no part of the world is a man in distress more readily assisted with the precious metals, which Englishmen at home distribute so grudgingly even to their nearest and dearest relatives, and the readiness of aid is not confined to pecuniary gifts, but includes much active zeal, and the cordial kindness of a good word in your favor with the distributors of patronage.

S.—Oh, yes! all this is true enough. But I would rather have the genuine affection which glows before an English Christmas fire, even when limited means prevent the hand from obeying the dictates of the heart, than all the easy kindness of an Indian acquaintance whose eleemosynary gold requires as slight a self-sacrifice as the expenditure of his breath. The man

in Calcutta who gives his gold and his good word, will, perhaps, forbear to cross the threshold of your door for years, though you live in the next street, and will content himself with giving you a kind nod on the day you embark for a distant shore, without the remotest prospect of another meeting with him in this world.

C.—But the mistake is yours, and the disappointment of your own seeking, if you *will* look for a friend in every acquaintance. Regard an acquaintance as an acquaintance only, and then tell me if such a generous associate as an Indian acquaintance is often met with within the dim walls of London? The sort of English friendship that thrives in a domestic snuggery, in our dear native land, is as rare as it is valuable, and nothing can be more cold and cautious and reserved and repulsive than Englishmen in England, in the public streets and in coffee houses, and steamers and stage coaches, and in large assemblies, and in the general intercourse of life. A stranger in England feels himself a sort of outcast and a suspected man. Every one seems afraid of him. Wherever he goes he is an intruder, and people regard him with that sort of look which seems to imply that, for aught they know, he may be a sharper or a vagabond. No man in England dreams of asking a favor from another under some years of intimacy. A single interview in Calcutta gives a man the courage to solicit an essential service.

S.—Well, and suppose I were to admit all this? It would not injure my case at all. I am not talking of mere familiarities and courtesies and occasional kindness but of *friendship*, and I maintain there is infinitely more of this priceless quality in England than in India. It is indeed more difficult to get into a social circle there than here, but when you do gain admittance into an amiable English family, you are charmed with the genuine interest which is taken in every thing that concerns you. If the hand of sickness then fall upon you, or sorrow lay prostrate all your mental energies, you discover the charm of female sympathy and attention, and the cheering and elevating influence of an honest and manly-minded adviser.

C.—You have been a great many years away from your

native land. You left it young. This explains your delusion. The young heart is unsuspecting. Depend upon it you often mistook the appearance of affection for the reality. The commonest little hypocrisies of social intercourse are as credible as Holy Writ to an innocent and inexperienced mind.

S.—Ah, but the friends of my youth are the friends of my age! They are unaltered. Time and distance have *tried* them and they are not found wanting.

C.—Rather you should say that time and distance have *preserved* them. You are good friends because you are not neighbours, and because you share the same old associations. Had you all along lived in the same house or street, and gradually worn away old impressions by intermediate ones, and encountered those innumerable small causes of coolness which beset all intimate friends of long standing, you might have looked upon them, with very different eyes at this hour.

S.—Oh no! I cannot believe it.

C.—You try Indian Society by too severe a test. If you had lived all your life in England, you would have compared the associates of your middle life with those of your youth, as all other people in England do, and of course your decision would have been in favor of your first friends. This is natural enough. But now the associates of your middle life—your countrymen in India—have to stand a still more severe comparison, because your early life, in addition to the charm which always hangs around the morning of existence, is rendered unspeakably more enchanting by those tender and beautiful dreams of the distant and the past which long exile always engenders. The first sweet illusions of life in your case were preserved unbroken, because you did not remain long enough in England to see how much hollowness there is even in the best society of your dear Fatherland. There is nothing between your golden-hued morning of life in your native country, when Innocence and Happiness were your companions, and a state of exile which depresses the heart, and a degree of worldly discernment which shakes your confidence in those around you.

S.—My dear fellow, you may argue the point as long and as ingeniously as you can, but you will never persuade me that the society of India is to be compared for a moment with that of England, the most domestic and affectionate in the world, and I think, if it were worth while, I could give you philosophical reasons why it is impossible that English people here should be otherwise than they are. They are mere birds of passage—fellow-travellers—familiar and kind enough when together, but indifferent and forgetful when divided.

ENGLAND AND BENGAL,

IN TWO PARTS;

AND

OTHER POEMS.

The following poems, with a few exceptions, have been written at intervals between the publication of the second edition of *Literary Leaves* and the date of the present Volume. I have reprinted the first piece from the former work, because it seems to me so suitable a companion to England and Bengal No. 2, that I was reluctant to keep the two poems separate. I have also reprinted two or three smaller poems, which I have altered and enlarged.

D. L. R.

ENGLAND AND BENGAL.

No. I.

AN ENGLISH LANDSCAPE—THE BANKS OF THE GANGES.

I stood upon an English hill,
And saw the far meandering rill,
A vein of liquid silver, run
Sparkling in the summer sun ;
While adown that green hill's side,
And along the valley wide,
Sheep, like small clouds touched with light,
Or like little breakers bright,
Sprinkled o'er a smiling sea,
Seemed to float at liberty.

Scattered all around were seen,
White cots on the meadows green,
Open to the sky and breeze,
Or peeping through the sheltering trees.
On a light gate, loosely hung,
Laughing children gaily swung ;
Oft their glad shouts, shrill and clear,
Came upon the startled ear,
Blended with the tremulous bleat,
Of truant lambs, or voices sweet,
Of birds, that take us by surprise,
And mock the quickly-searching eyes.

Nearer sat a bright-haired boy,
Whistling with a thoughtless joy ;
A shepherd's crook was in his hand,
Emblem of a mild command ;
And upon his rounded cheek
Were hues that ripened apples streak,
Disease, nor pain, nor sorrowing,
Touched that small Arcadian king ;
His sinless subjects wandered free—
Confusion without anarchy.
Happier he upon his throne,
The breezy hill—though all alone—
Than the grandest monarchs proud
Who mistrust the kneeling crowd.
For *he* ne'er trembles for his fate,
Nor groans beneath the cares of state,

On a gently rising ground,
The lovely valley's farthest bound,
Bordered by an ancient wood,
The cots in thicker clusters stood ;
And a church uprose between,
Hallowing the peaceful scene.
Distance o'er its old walls threw
A soft and dim cerulean hue,
While the sun-lit gilded spire
Gleamed as with celestial fire !

I have crossed the ocean wave,
Haply for a foreign grave,
Haply never more to look
On a British hill or brook ;
Haply never more to hear
Sounds unto my childhood dear ;
Yet if sometimes on my soul
Bitter thoughts beyond control

Throw a shade more dark than night,
Soon upon the mental sight
Flashes forth a pleasant ray
Brighter, holier than the day;
And unto that happy mood
All seems beautiful and good.

Seated on a bank of green,
Gazing on an Indian scene,
I have dreams the mind to cheer,
And a feast for eye and ear.
At my feet a river flows,
And its broad face richly glows,
With the glory of the sun,
Whose proud race is nearly run.
Ne'er before did sea or stream
Kindle thus beneath his beam ;
Ne'er did miser's eye behold
Such a glittering mass of gold!
'Gainst the gorgeous radiance float
Darkly, many a sloop and boat,
While in each the figures seem
Like the shadows of a dream ;
Swiftly, passively, they glide,
As sliders on a frozen tide.

Sinks the sun—the sudden night
Falls, yet still the scene is bright.
Now the fire-fly's living spark
Glances through the foliage dark,
And along the dusky stream
Myriad lamps, with ruddy gleam,
On the small waves float and quiver,
As if upon the favored river,
And to mark the sacred hour,
Stars had fallen in a shower.

For many a mile is either shore
Illumined with a countless store,
Of lustres ranged in glittering rows ;
Each a golden column throws
To light the dim depths of the tide ;
And the moon, in all her pride,
Though beauteously her regions glow,
Views a scene as fair below.*

Never yet hath waking vision
Wrought a picture more Elysian ;
Never gifted poet seen
Aught more radiant and serene !
Though upon my native shore,
Mid the hallowed haunts of yore,
There are scenes that might impart
Dearer pleasure to my heart,
Scenes that in the soft light gleam
Of Youth's unforgotten dream,
Yet the soul were dull and cold
That its tribute could withhold
When Enchantment's magic wand
Waves o'er this romantic land !

---

* This description has reference to the night of some religious festival.

ENGLAND AND BENGAL.

No. II.

AN INDIAN SUNSET—A DREAM OF ENGLAND.

THE setting sun is broad and bright ;—
The clouds, embathed in golden light,
Firm as eternal mountains seem,
Though unsubstantial as a dream.
Like a sun-lit frozen sea,
But lovelier far, how silently
The green earth sleepeth ! Each small air,
That toyed with tremulous leaflets fair,
And won with its unconscious art
The fragrance of the rose's heart
Hath sunk to rest, like children gay
Suddenly slumbering 'midst their play.

The trees in tranquil beauty stand,
Touched by sweet Enchantment's wand.

Tendrils, thrilled with lightest air,
Hang motionless as painted hair
Of saints from hallowed panes that smile
Upon the hushed Cathedral aisle.

Sun-kissed lucid leaves are seen
Flushed with blood of golden green,
Bright as slumbering features fine,
Blushing with a dream divine.

Lengthened lines of light and shade,
With more than Art's sweet magic laid,
Streak the rich earth's breast serene,
With brightest orange, deepest green.

Radiant cloudlets in the west,
Images of blissful rest,
Wear those strange transcendant hues
That mock the Painter and the Muse;
While upon the glassy lake,
Where no ripple dares to break,
Lies each soft reflected dye,
Fixed as in the breezless sky.

Now that sky and lake seem one,
The land between is like a zone,
Or panoramic garden fair
Hanging lightly in mid air.

Reverently turn away
From the quickly sinking day,
Watch not the proud lord of light
Pass to subterranean night.

Mark his solemn birth-place dim
Where the spectral shadows swim,
And the bat with sudden stir
Startles the thoughtful wanderer.
Or in dusky grove behold
Tiny stars of living gold,
Darting, twinkling, till each bough
Like a spangled vest doth show.

This land is not my father-land,
And yet I love it—for the hand
Of God hath left its mark sublime
On Nature's face in every clime;—

Though from home and friends we part,
Nature and the human heart,
Still may soothe the wanderer's care—
And his God is every where.

Beneath Bengala's azure skies,
No vallies sink, no green hills rise,
Like those the vast sea-billows make—
The land is level as a lake.*
But, oh! what gaints of the wood
Wave their wide arms, or calmly brood
Each o'er his own deep rounded shade
When noon's fierce sun the breeze hath laid,
And all is still. On every plain
How green the sward, or rich the grain!
In jungle wild and garden trim,*
Open lawn and covert dim,
What glorious shrubs and flowerets gay,
Bright birds and lordly beasts of prey!
How prodigally Gunga pours
Her wealth of waves through verdant shores
O'er which the sacred peepul bends,
And oft its skeleton line extends
Of twisted root, well-laved and bare,
Half in water, half in air!

Fair scenes! where breeze and sun diffuse
The sweetest odours, fairest hues—
Where Day his brightest aspect shows,
And his gentle sister throws
Her softest spell, on silent plain,
Stirless wood, and slumbering main—
Where the lucid starry sky
Opens most to mortal eye

---

* The lower part of Bengal, not far from Calcutta, is here described.

The wide and mystic dome serene
Meant for visitants unseen,
A dream-like temple, air-built hall,
Where spirits pure hold festival !

Fair scenes ! whence envious Art might steal
More charms than Fancy's realms reveal—
Where the tall palm to the sky
Lifts its wreath triumphantly—
And the bambu's tapering bough
Loves its flexile arch to throw—
Where sleeps the favored lotus white,
On the still lake's bosom bright—
Where the champac's blossoms shine ;
Offerings meet for Brahma's shrine,
While the fragrance floateth wide
O'er velvet lawn and glassy tide—
Where the mangoe tope bestows
Night at noon-day—cool repose,
'Neath burning heavens—a hush profound
Breathing o'er the shaded ground—
Where the medicinal neem,
Of palest foliage, softest gleam,
And the small leafed tamarind
Tremble at each whispering wind—
And the long-plumed cocoas stand
Like the princes of the land,
Near the betel's pillar slim,
With capital richly wrought and trim—
And the neglected, wild sonail
Drops her yellow ringlets pale—
And light airs summer odours throw
From the bala's breast of snow—
Where the Briarean bąnian shades
The crowded ghát, while Indian maids,

Untouched by noon-tide's burning rays,
Lave the sleek limb, or fill the vase,
With liquid life, or on the head
Replace it, and, with graceful tread,
And form erect, and movement slow,
Back to their simple dwellings go,
[Walls of earth that stoutly stand,
Neatly smoothed with wetted hand—
Straw-roofs yellow once and gay,
Turned by time and tempest gray—]
Where the merry minahs crowd
Umbrageous haunts, and chirrup loud—
And shrilly talk the parrots green
Midst the thick leaves dimly seen—
And through the quivering foliage play,
Light as birds, the squirrels gay,*
Quickly as the noontide beams
Dance upon the rippled streams—
Where the pariah* howls with fear,
If the white man passeth near—
Where the beast that mocks our race
With taper finger, solemn face,
In the cool shade sits at ease
Calm and grave as Socrates—
Where the sluggish buffaloe
Wallows in mud, and huge and slow,
Like massive cloud or sombre van,
Moves the land leviathan †—
Where beneath the jungle's screen
Close-enwoven, lurks unseen
The couchant tiger ; and the snake
His sly and sinuous way doth make
Through the rich mead's grassy net,
Like a miniature rivulet—

---

* The Dog of Bengal. † The Elephant.

Where small white cattle, scattered wide,
Browse from dawn to even-tide—
Where the river-watered soil
Scarce demands the ryot's toil;
And the rice field's emerald light
Outvies Italian meadows bright;—

Where leaves of every shape and dye,
Blossoms varied as the sky
The fancy kindle; fingers fair
That never closed on aught but air;
Hearts, that never heaved a sigh;
Wings, that never learned to fly;
Cups, that ne'er went table round;
Bells, that never rang with sound;
Golden crowns, of little worth;
Silver stars, that strew the earth;
Filagree fine and curious braid,
Breathed, not labored, grown, not made;
Tresses like the beams of morn,
Without a thought of triumph worn;
Tongues that prate not; many an eye
Untaught midst hidden things to pry;
Brazen trumpets, long and bright,
That never summoned to the fight;
Shafts, that never pierced a side,
And plumes, that never waved with pride;—
Scarcely Art a shape may know
But Nature here that shape can show.

Through this soft air, o'er this warm sod,
Stern deadly Winter never trod;
The woods their pride for centuries wear,
And not a living branch is bare;
Each field for ever boasts its bowers,
And every season brings its flowers.

Bengala's plains are richly green,
Her azure skies of dazzling sheen,
Her rivers vast, her forests grand,
Her gardens lovely,—but the land,
Though dear to countless eyes it be,
And fair to mine, hath not for me
The charm ineffable of *home.*
For still I yearn to see the foam
Of wild waves on thy pebbled shore,
Dear Albion ! to ascend once more
Thy snowy cliffs ; to hear again
The murmur of the circling main—
To stroll down each romantic dale
Beloved in boyhood—to inhale
Fresh life on bare and breezy hills—
To trace the coy retreating rills—
To see the clouds at summer-tide
Dappling all the landscape wide ;
To mark the varying gloom and glow
As the seasons come and go—
Again the green meads to behold
Thick strewn with silvery gems and gold,
Where kine, bright-spotted, large and sleek,
Browse silently, with aspect meek,
Or motionless in shallow stream
Stand mirror'd, till their twin shapes seem,
Feet linked to feet, forbid to sever,
By some strange magic fixed for ever.

And, oh ! once more I fain would see
(Here never seen) a poor man *free*,
And valuing more an humble name
But stainless than a guilty fame.
How sacred is the simplest cot,
Where Freedom dwells—where she is not
How mean the palace ! Where's the spot

She loveth more than thy small isle,
Queen of the sea? Where hath her smile
So stirred man's inmost nature? Where
Are courage firm, and virtue fair,
And manly pride, so often found
As in rude huts on English ground,
Where e'en the serf who slaves for hire
May kindle with a freeman's fire?

How proud a sight to English eyes
Are England's village families!
The patriarch, with his silver hair,
The matron grave, the maiden fair,
The rose-cheeked boy, the sturdy lad,
On Sabbath day all neatly clad—
Methinks I see them wend their way
On some refulgent morn of May—
By hedgerows trim, of fragrance rare,
Towards the hallowed House of Prayer!

I can love *all* lovely lands,
But England *most;* for she commands,
As if she bore a parent's part,
The dearest movements of my heart,
And here I may not breathe her name,
Without a thrill through all my frame.

Never shall this heart be cold
To thee, my country! till the mould
(Or *thine* or *this*) be o'er it spread,
And form its dark and silent bed:
I never think of bliss below
But thy sweet hills their green heads show,
Of love and beauty never dream,
But English faces round me gleam!

E'en now the charm of English skies
Fancy's wizard glass supplies.
Beneath the visionary light
Familiar scenes grow fresh and bright.

Across the smooth lawn in the sun
I see my own sweet children run;
I see their laughing features fair,
Their soft blue eyes and flaxen hair.
Their distant father's friends of yore
Stand smiling at the cottage door,
With one whose fond but earnest air
Reveals a rapture touched with care;
Thrilled as with a sweet surprise
A mother's heart is in her eyes!

Ah! these are images and dreams
More dear than foreign groves and streams,
Though fair as landscapes bade to shine
Beneath the primal light divine!

WOMAN.

THE day-god sitting on his western throne,
With all his 'gorgeous company of clouds'—
The gentle moon that meekly disenshrouds
Her beauty when the solar glare is gone—
The myriad eyes of night—the pleasant tone
Of truant rills, when o'er the pebbled ground
Their silver voices tremble—the calm sound
Of rustling leaves in noon-tide forests lone—
The cheerful song of birds—the hum of bees—
The zephyr's dance that, like the footing fine
Of moonlight fays, scarce prints the glassy seas,-
Are *all* enchantments! But oh, what are these
When music, poetry, and love combine
In WOMAN's voice and lineaments divine!

TO LAHA PENNOO: THE GOD OF WAR.

A KHOOND WAR LYRIC.*

I.

GREAT God of Battles! Oh, forgive
 (For thou our wants and weakness saw.)
If we so long have seemed to live
 Regardless of thy glorious law;
Our herds were few, our fields were bare,
Our bravest warriors bowed with care.

II.

But now Fate scowleth on the foe,
 And Famine haunts each cot and bower,
And some the fever-blasts lay low
 And some the gaunt wild beasts devour;
Unnerved is many a manly limb,
And many a daring eye is dim.

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* I refer the reader to Captain S. C. Macpherson's Report upon the Khoonds of the districts of Ganjam and Cuttack, and to the interesting articles upon the subject, in the *Calcutta Quarterly Review*, for curious and valuable information respecting this most singular people. The Khoonds still offer up human sacrifices to one of their deities, (the Earth Goddess) a custom to which the British Indian Government are endeavoring to put a stop by earnest remonstrance and persuasion. There is every reason to believe that this laudable object will be speedily attained, by a continuance of the same mild but steady and determined policy which has hitherto influenced the intercourse of our Political agents with the Khoonds.

This war lyric and the lyric that follows are versified from literal prose translations of genuine Khoond poems.

III.

Oh! Laha Pennoo! Lord of strife!
  Oh! watch these weapons as thine own!
And at each mark of mortal life
  Direct the shaft and hurl the stone;
Make wide the wounds on every frame,
Deface the dead, the living maim.

IV.

Oh! let our ponderous axes fall
  Like blows of death from tiger-paws,
Or crush bone, flesh, and garb, and all,
  As 'twixt the fierce hyena's jaws;
Let arms not ours as brittle be
As long pods of the karta tree.

V.

Each aim misguide, unnerve each hand
  Of those to mock our might that dare,
Make all their weapons light as sand,
  Or mowa blossoms borne on air;
Or let our wounds quick dry again,
As blood-drops on the dusty plain.

VI.

May every axe wear ruddy hue
  As home we come from victory's field;
And while our women, proud and true,
  Their stores of sweet refreshment yield,
May neighbouring Beauties seek our bowers,
And yearn to mix their blood with ours.

VII.

Our war-gained wealth let all behold,
  Brass vessels, herds, and scented leaf,
And maids present to parents old
  The trophies of our struggle brief;

And fowl and buffaloe and sheep
Thy shrine in sacred blood shall steep!

VIII.

Oh! Laha Pennoo! God of War!
  Not new the favor now we crave;
For thy fierce smile, like lurid star,
  Oft led to strife our fathers brave;
And we their sons, when danger lours,
Still hail *their* honored God and *ours!*

TO BERA PENNOO: THE EARTH GODDESS.

A KHOOND INVOCATION.

[*This invocation precedes a human sacrifice.*]

I.

GODDESS of Earth! Dread source of ill!*
Thy just revenge o'erwhelms us still
      For rites unpaid;
But oh! forgive!—Our stores are small,
Our lessened means uncertain all,
      Denied thine aid.

II.

Goddess that taught mankind to feel
Poison in plants, and death in steel—
      A fearful lore—
Forgive—forgive! and ne'er again
Shall we neglect thy shrine to stain
      With human gore!

* She is considered the source of all evil, physical and moral.

III.

Let plenty all our land o'erspread,
Make green the ground with living bread ;
Our pastures fill
So close with cattle side by side
That no bare spot may be descried
From distant hill.

IV.

And when unto the broad flat pool,
Their thirst to quench, their sides to cool,
Our herds are led ;
So num'rous make them that no form
Of fish or frog, or toad or worm,
Survive their tread.

V.

So fill with sheep each ample fold
That he who digs man-deep the mould,
Their compost rare,
Meet not a stone. May swine abound
Until their plough-like snouts the ground
For seed prepare.

VI.

So fill our cots with childhood's din
The voice be rarely heard within,
And ne'er without ;
Each thatch with crowded poultry hide,
Give jars that bruise the fountain's side
With metal stout.

VII.

Oh ! Bera Pennoo ! once again
Protect us in the grove and plain
From beasts of prey ;
Nor let sly snake or tiger bold
Fright children, save in stories old
Of fathers grey.

VIII.

Oh! make it each man's only care
Yearly to build a store-room fair
For goods unspent;
And we thy rites shall duly pay;—
Lo! one bought victim now we slay—
One life present!*

STANZAS.

[FROM AN UNPUBLISHED NOVEL.]

I.

'Tis one brief week, since thou and I
Sat hand in hand, and side by side;
Now each beholds a different sky,
From crowded streets, from waters wide.
Though round me blue waves brightly roll,
And o'er me heaven's broad arch is fair,
Still lingering turns my faithful soul
To solemn London's misty air.

II.

'Mid that vast city's countless walls,
One small dim room is dear to me;
For deepest gloom unheeded falls
Where mutual hearts love's visions see.
And hours Elysian oft were mine
When the sick day grew dun as night,
For still that star-like eye of thine
Would kindle with an inward light.

* The victims are all purchased. An *unbought* life is supposed to be an abomination to the Deity. The price of a human victim varies from fifty to a hundred lives—that is to say, a hundred living brutes, cows, pigs, or sheep.

III.

I mix with other men, but find
Their thoughts and mine are not the same ;
The cloud of care is on my mind,
The curse of sickness on my frame ;
And saddened and reserved and lone,
I feel life's burden hard to bear,
Save when sweet Woman's gentler tone
Breathes more than magic in mine ear.

IV.

When thine unrivalled beauty shone
Within the dear though dusky room,
Like Cynthia's on her silver throne
Thy brightening brow dispersed the gloom ;
And when thy fond and playful wile
Hath cheated grief of all her store
Oh, never tone, or touch, or smile
So thrilled a lover's frame before !

V.

Lady, those farewell tears of thine,
From love's own heaven a sacred shower,
Were like the fabled fount divine
Whose every drop became a flower ;
For fair and precious fancies rose
E'en while I watched those bright tears start,
And now where'er thy wanderer goes
He bears an Eden in his heart !

1845.

THE FRIEND'S QUARREL.

I.

Fair Lady! as though friendship's chain seem broken,
It holds, with wonted force, this faithful heart,
I fain reserve's delusive veil would part,
And learn if haply yet some lingering token
Of old regard and tenderness supprest
Remaineth lurking in thy gentle breast.

II.

Fate with no heavier blow nor keener sting
May crush or goad us, when the genial power
Of friendship fails and trifles of an hour
Rend each dear link that from our early spring,
Held us in pleasant thrall. The cup of life
Bears nought so bitter as the drops of strife!

III.

Alas! I may not meet thee in the crowd
Unmoved—for in thy sweet familiar face,
The hallowed past hath left a startling trace:—
At once, with sudden impulse, fond and proud,
My bosom heaves—unconsciously my feet
Approach thee, and my lips thy name repeat!

IV.

But oh! the deadly pang, the freezing chill,
When by the calm gaze of that altered eye
The spell is broken! Lady, if the sigh
That meets thine ear could say what feelings thrill
This troubled heart, or what my sad looks meant,
Methinks e'en thy stern coldness might relent.

V.

I cannot think that all our mutual dreams
Were false as twilight shadows, nor believe
Thine heart could change, or words like thine deceive;
And still as travellers for the sun's bright beams
Up-gaze in hope, though clouds may lour awhile,
I wait and watch for thy returning smile.

THE LOVER'S QUARREL.

I.

AND can'st thou leave me thus? Oh, say *farewell!*
E'en grant one gracious look before we part
For *ever*—and the troubled thoughts that swell
So fearfully in this o'erburthened heart
Shall own a momentary lull serene,
Like sun-soothed billows blustering storms between.

II.

Still this averted eye?—this silence cold—
This sullen cloud upon a brow so fair—
This lifeless langour of the hand I hold
Without its will—this spirit-freezing air,
Never before by frame so lovely worn—
This dumb rebuke—and this curved lip of scorn?

III.

Alas! that eye and brow and lip and hand,
Late ministrant to Love's unclouded heaven,
Are lost to me. I may not now command
E'en the kind word to parting strangers given,
Nor one relenting look, although the last,
In this death-hour of all the tender past.

IV.

How frail is language when, as dark as death,
The panting heart its muffled woes would speak!
Sleep's night-mare struggle, or the bubbling breath
Of drowning mariner, is not more weak;
Or even thou soft pity's pang should'st learn
And cease to stand so statue-like and stern.

V.

'Tis but a dream! It cannot be that thou
So tender once and true, so bright and warm,
Can'st bear a frozen heart, though on that brow
Stern Winter seem to reign. Alas! what charm
May break this dreadful trance—once more make known
That blue eye's liquid glow, that lip's love-tone?

VI.

Oh, sunshine of my day—my star of night!
Queen of my waking hours, and of my dreams
The one pervading image!—if thy light
Pass from me now, as pass the solar beams
Down the flushed west on foreign brows to shine,
What were the darkness of the grave to mine?

VII.

Art silent still?—Oh dearest Lady, *speak*,
Nor mock me like the dead! If ever tone
Or look of mine hath roused that spirit meek,
Or turned a soft and loving heart to stone,
Forgive—forgive;—I bow me to the dust,
And with repentant throes to mercy trust.

VIII.

Lo! the dark cloud dissolves, and gracious rain
Falls gently from the dimmed cerulean eye!
I hear that soft melodious voice again,
More sweet than streamlet's laugh or zephyr's sigh,—
Oh, Love's divinest Priestess, never more
Try my heart's faith with such dread penance sore?

VALLEE DES VAUX.*

Air—The Meeting of the Waters.

I.

If I dream of the past, at fair Fancy's command,
Up-floats from the blue sea thy small sunny land!
O'er thy green hills, sweet Jersey, the fresh breezes blow,
But silent and warm is thy Vallée des Vaux!

II.

There alone have I loitered 'mid blossoms of gold,
And forgot that the great world was crowded and cold,
Nor believed that a land of enchantment could show
A vale more divine than the Vallée des Vaux.

III.

A few white little cots, calm as clouds in the sky,
Or as still sails at sea, when the light breezes die,
And a mill with its wheel in the brook's silver glow
Form thy hamlet of beauty, sweet Vallée des Vaux!

IV.

As that brook prattled by like an infant at play,
And each wave as it passed stole a moment away,
I thought how serenely a long life would flow,
By the sweet little brook in the Vallée des Vaux.

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* Valley of Vallies.

LINES TO A SKYLARK.

WANDERER through the wilds of air!
Freely as an angel fair
Thou dost leave the solid earth,
Man is bound to from his birth.
Scarce a cubit from the grass
Springs the foot of lightest lass—
Thou upon a cloud can'st leap,
And o'er broadest rivers sweep,
Climb up heaven's steepest height,
Fluttering, twinkling, in the light;
Soaring, singing; till, sweet bird,
Thou art neither seen nor heard,
Lost in azure fields afar
Like a distance-hidden star
That alone for angels bright
Breathes its music, sheds its light.

Warbler of the morning's mirth!
When the gray mists rise from earth,
And the round dews on each spray
Glitter in the golden ray,
And thy wild notes, sweet though high,
Fill the wide cerulean sky,
Is there human heart or brain
Can resist thy merry strain?
But not always soaring high,
Making man upturn his eye
Just to learn what shape of love,
Raineth music from above;—
All the sunny cloudlets fair
Floating on the azure air,

All the glories of the sky
Thou leavest unreluctantly,
Silently with happy breast
To drop into thy lowly nest.

Though the frame of man must be
Bound to earth, the soul is free ;
But that freedom oft doth bring
Discontent and sorrowing.
Oh ! that from each waking vision,
Gorgeous vista, gleam Elysian,
From ambition's dizzy height,
And from hope's illusive light,
Man, like thee, glad lark, could brook
Upon a low green spot to look,
And with home-affections blest
Sink into as calm a nest!



STANZAS.



Lady—long years have gone
Since last we said *farewell*,
Yet still thy voice's tone,
Beloved of yore so well,
May hush this heart's repining
When hopes are most declining.

II.

Still breathes that voice benign
In memory's twilight hour :—
That star-like eye divine
Hath still persuasive power,
Through distance dim revealing
The soul of thought and feeling.

III.

When life was fresh and gay
I loved that star to hail;
And sought its sacred ray
When other charms would fail;
'T would chasten reckless gladness–
And soothe and sweeten sadness.

IV.

And e'en that stern despair
Which seems to scorn relief
Thy sweet maternal care
Hath changed to gentlest grief;
Thy mild and mournful smiling
The softened heart beguiling.

V.

I wander far from thee,
Yet do not dwell the less
On all thou hast done for me
With such true tenderness;
For time and distance never
The links of love may sever.

VI.

Though 'neath these foreign skies
Through dreariest wilds I stray,
Thine image still shall rise
To cheer me on my way;—
'T was o'er my cradle bending—
'T will bless my life's dark ending!

STANZAS.

I.

Fling wide the casement, dearest—
Oh, what a sight is here!
This sky is far the clearest
I've seen for many a year.
It well might tempt the curious eye
Its still cerulean depths to try,
To pierce its glorious veil of light
For dream-like hints of secrets bright;
But though it more transparent seem
Than glassy lake or shallow stream,
It mocks us like the purple sea
That shrouds vast worlds of mystery.

II.

Yet why need mortal vision
Thus strain its bounded powers?
'Tis no such hard transition
To turn to Earth's green bowers;
To watch the white sheep on the hill,
Or whiter swans on lakelets still—
Or see the village boys at play
With tireless limbs and spirits gay—
While the swart laborer wipes his brow,
And aged men, beneath the bough
Of aged oak, the luxury share
Of slumber in the noon-tide air.

III.

How sweet is his condition
Whose calm heart knows content ;
He findeth rich provision
Of all for mortals meant.
We need not seek forbidden lore
'Mid scenes that own a sanctioned store
Of pleasures pure and knowledge bright
For minds that yearn for truth and right ;
The bee that hums o'er Indian bowers
Is not so blest with choice of flowers,
With all the soul of sweetness rife
As man with means of mental life.

IV.

Now shut the casement, dearest,
Methinks sweet sleep is nigh,
The hour that most thou fearest
Is passing gently by ;
Fair Nature's smile hath done its part,
A summer feeling calms my heart.
E'en now, these heavy lids would close
And lock my soul in blest repose :
Then kiss me, sweet one,—shed no tears
For me, nor cherish fruitless fears ;
I know the strong life in me still
Can more than thwart this fever's will.

CHEOPS; OR THE GREAT PYRAMID AT GIZEH.

WHAT forms majestic, once to fame well known,
(Some yet remembered in their sleep of death,)
Have stood where I now stand! How oft the breath
(For ages hushed in dumb sepulchral stone,)
Of potent king, rapt bard, or sage serene,
In this lone sea of sand, so wide and bare,
A human charm hath thrown upon the scene,
And broke the dreadful silence of the air!

Mine the sole heart now beating at the base
Of this vast pile—eternal mount sublime
Upreared by mortal hand! My strained eyes trace
The top-most steps against the bright blue sky
Until my panting spirit yearns to climb
Higher and higher still.—This may not last—
Ah no! the weight of mortal mystery
Brings me to earth.—
—— The future and the past
Crowd on the present, like blent clouds on high,
When the winds meet, or waves upon the sea,
Or dim bewildering dreams, confused and vast.

No daily sight is here—no common sound—
To disenchant the pale earth's trance profound.
The sense of solitude, the solemn fear,
When lonely things eterne oppress the brain,
Now make me sigh a human voice to hear
And greet some kind familiar face again.

Egypt, 1843.

THE ISLAND OF PENANG.

I.

I STAND upon the mountain's brow—
I drink the cool fresh mountain breeze—
I see thy little town below,*
Thy villas, hedge-rows, fields and trees,
And hail thee with exultant glow,
GEM OF THE ORIENTAL SEAS !

II.

A cloud had settled on my heart—
My frame had borne perpetual pain—
I yearned and panted to depart
From dread Bengala's sultry plain—
Fate smiled,—Disease withholds his dart—
I breathe the breath of life again !

III.

With lightened heart, elastic tread,
Almost with youth's rekindled flame,
I roam where loveliest scenes outspread
Raise thoughts and visions none could name,
Save those on whom the Muses shed
A spell, a dower of deathless fame.

IV.

I *feel*, but oh ! could ne'er *pourtray*.
Sweet Isle ! thy charms of land and wave,
The bowers that own no winter day,
The brooks where timid wild birds lave,
The forest hills where insects gay†
Mimic the music of the brave !

* George Town.

† The Hill-trumpeter.

V.

I see from this proud airy height
A lovely Lilliput below !
Ships, roads, groves, gardens, mansions white,
And trees in trimly ordered row,*
Present almost a toy-like sight,
A miniature scene, a fairy show !

VI.

But lo ! beyond the ocean stream,
That like a sheet of silver lies,
As glorious as a Poet's dream
The grand Malayan mountains rise,
And while their sides in sunlight beam
Their dim heads mingle with the skies.

VII.

Men laugh at bards who live *in clouds*—
The clouds *beneath* me gather now,
Or gliding slow in solemn crowds,
Or singly, touched with sunny glow,
Like mystic shapes in snowy shrouds,
Or lucid veils on Beauty's brow.

VIII.

While all around the wandering eye
Beholds enchantments rich and rare,
Of wood, and water, earth, and sky
A panoramic vision fair,
The Dyal breathes his liquid sigh,
And magic floats upon the air !

IX.

Oh ! lovely and romantic Isle !
How cold the heart thou couldst not please !

* Nutmeg and Clove plantations.

Thy very dwellings seem to smile
Like quiet nests 'mid summer trees!
I leave thy shores—but weep the while—
GEM OF THE ORIENTAL SEAS!

Penang, Dec. 1842.

SONNET.

ON RETURNING TO CALCUTTA AFTER A VOYAGE TO THE STRAITS OF MALACCA.

UMBRAGEOUS woods, green dells, and mountains high,
And bright cascades, and wide cerulean seas,
Slumbering, or snow-wreathed by the freshening breeze,
And isles like motionless clouds upon the sky
In silent summer noons, late charmed mine eye,
Until my soul was stirred like wind-touched trees,
And passionate love and speechless ecstasies
Up-raised the thoughts in spiritual depths that lie.
Dear scenes, ye haunt me still! Yet I behold
This sultry city on the level shore
Not all unmoved; for here our fathers bold
Won proud historic names in days of yore,
And here are living hearts that ne'er grow cold,
And many a friendly hand, and open door.

Calcutta, January, 1843.

SONNETS.

BY A BRITISH-INDIAN EXILE TO HIS DISTANT CHILDREN.

I.

My sad heart sickens in this solitude—
Home is no longer home,—yet eloquent
Are these lone walls of by-gone merriment—
The noisy pranks of that small blithesome brood
That call me *father!* Memories sad intrude
Like silent ghosts, where late the air was rent
With shouts of joy—where merriest hours I spent
With merriest playmates in their merriest mood!
Dear human links that bind me to life's oar!
Sweet stars that pierce the dark cell of my heart!
Clearer than in a glass, e'en now before
Mine eyes ye come as when so grieved to part
I shed the bitter tear:—ah! Fancy's art
Transcends the wondrous skill of wizards hoar!

II.

Not mirrored shapes—*realities* ye seem!
Sweet ones! at this glad moment I behold
What never famed Italian painter old
Hath rivalled or the poet's printed dream—
A living picture! She whose soft eyes gleam
With gentle love—who, coy, but ah, not cold,
Drops their fair lids when strangers' looks are bold—
Sits at the side of one whose bliss supreme
Is all maternal. To that mother's knee
The youngest girl, half-pleased, half-frightened, flies;
For lo! my cherub boy, with innocent glee,
Masks his frank features for a gay surprize!
Loud laughs the second-born:—her charms are three—
Rose cheeks, and cherry lips, and violet eyes!

III.

I hear the waves upon the sad sea shore—
And ah! my visionary group hath fled!
To me those dear existences are dead:
For distance is a death that all deplore
Who part as we have parted, never more
To meet as we have met—alas! instead
Each with a sadder heart, a graver head—
So different, though the same!—Perchance before
Their cottage white my prattlers are at play!—
I hear the waves upon the sad sea-shore!
Those billows roll between us,—who shall say
They'll bear my treasures back—that they'll restore
A family to a father, weak and gray.
Who soon must sleep beneath earth's grassy floor?

Calcutta, July 12, 1842.

SONNET.

The thoughtful and the sensitive have hours
Of care unspeakable and mysterious gloom,
When like the gasp for breath within the tomb
Of buried life, a stifling pain o'erpowers
The struggling soul. On all things horror lowers
And 'neath the deep sense of the hideous doom
Of death, of life the vanity and fume,
Of hope the guile, the bravest spirit cowers.
When thus our hearts despair and weep and quail
And feel all friendship vain, and seem alone,
Yet yearn for sympathies that nought avail,
Oh God of Heaven! from thine awful throne
Look down with pity, and forgive the groan,
As human fortitude begins to fail!

SONNET—THE POET.

O'er the true poet's life there cometh never
The frost of age. His ardent soul sublime
Defies the petty tyrannies of Time,
And proudly laughs at envious Death's endeavour.
Though wanes the fleshly frame, his spirit ever
Is warm and radiant as the cloudless clime
Of Paradise, when earth was in her prime,
And none e'er dreamed that life and love could sever.
Though in the cold world common hearts may freeze,
And deem the poetry of life is dead,
The Muse's favored son no desert sees,
No winter feels. Her sunny smile can shed
A living beauty on the leafless trees,
And fill with summer thoughts a hoary head.

LINES.

ADDRESSED TO TWO SISTERS, AND WRITTEN IN THEIR ALBUM.

Bright fragant bowers, and clouds of glorious hue—
Rich meadows in the yellow sunset sleeping—
Proud birds on radiant wings through regions blue
O'er hill and vale their course majestic keeping—
Gay butterflies, with gold and purple dotted,
[Flowers of the air for which earth's flowers seem made,]—
The couchant mountain like a leopard spotted,
'Neath freckled skies, with sunshine and with shade—
The vast sea-waves—the shining level lake—
Green nooks, where timid Peace is often hiding—
Wild echoes that a mystic music make—
The sound of waters through the lone wood gliding—

The rosy morn, bright noon, and eve serene—
The twilight dim, by which the day is bounded—
The swarthy night, so like an Ethiop Queen,
In spangled vest, and by dark hosts surrounded,—
All sights and sounds that charm the eye or ear,
In loveliest landscapes and in sweetest hours,
Have fired my soul with feelings deep and dear
As e'er thrilled passionate bards of loftier powers.

These are enchantments exquisite and true,
And seem to breathe a bright immortal story
Of happiness and Eden ; for the hue
Is not quite gone of that fair garden's glory !
The Maker's hand is seen in all around,
Beauty and matchless art a God revealing,
And blind and dull as moles beneath the ground
They who for these have neither sight nor feeling.

Yet hill and dale and ocean and the sky,
And living things that own not mind's relation,
Though lovely, never to the heart or eye
Are dearest, fairest of our God's creation.
Thought kindleth thought, and soul is linked to soul
We yearn for interchange of every feeling ;
We pant for sympathy—the aim—the goal
Of earthly dreams and of all human dealing.

I love the hill and dale, the sea and sky,
I love their happy tenants,—but oh ! never
Could this warm heart renounce communion high
With *spiritual* life—from *human* converse sever !
I pass from clime to clime, from scene to scene,
And sadness steals upon each farewell hour ;—
'Tis hard to look with steadfast eye serene
For the last time upon a bird or flower ;—
But never have I gazed on human face,
And knew 'twould seem a dream upon the morrow,
[A distant phantom difficult to trace]
Without a pensive sigh, or tear of sorrow.

Oh ! then, ye sister spirits, fair and kind,
With merriment and song my sad heart cheering,
When glides my bark before the southern wind,
And like a cloud the land is disappearing,
Believe me I shall feel, alas ! too well,
This bitter truth—*how painful is all parting !*
Yet while I breathe my lingering, last farewell,
And while into mine eyes dim tears are starting—
'Twill surely something soothe that hour's emotion
To think this simple lay my name may save,
When I am wandering far o'er land and ocean,
Or haply slumbering in the silent grave.

Penang, 1842.

FAREWELL STANZAS.

I.

No brighter form e'er flashed on poet's dream
Than thine, dear lady, virtuous as thou'rt fair,
Pure as the first gush of a mountain stream,
Serene and soft as is the summer air.

II.

I've drank the magic of thy voice in song,
I've watched the pictured wonders of thine hand ;
Not sweeter sounds the vocal woods prolong,
Not fairer hues enrobe the sea and land.

III.

A galaxy of charms—a priceless dower—
Wit, genius, worth, and loveliness are thine ;
If fortune on the crowd such gifts could shower
This world might seem unspeakably divine.

IV.

But briar and barren weed and poisonous plant,
Outnumber and o'ergrow the fruits and flowers ;
The finer spells that hallow and enchant
The pressure of the vulgar throng o'erpowers.

V.

Thy sweetly moulded form—thine angel face—
The music of thy voice—the blended air
Of artless innocence and mental grace—
The radiant spirit Time itself shall spare—

VI.

Oh ! the dear memory of charms like these
Can ne'er desert and disenchant the heart !
The wanderer's soul its distant idol sees
And not in utter darkness I depart.

VII.

From day's enamoured eye yon western hill
Conceals the sun, but not its lingering light,
And thus the severing screen of distance still
Thine image leaves till death's all-curtaining night.

Penang, 1842.

MORNING LANDSCAPE IN PENANG.

A VIEW FROM "THE GREAT HILL."

DAY dimly breaks. From this aerial height
I downward gaze in wonder; for the scene
Hath wildly changed! The sylvan villas white,
Small winding paths, and shadowy groves serene,
The miniature town, the sea so blue and bright,
The speck-like ships, the little islets green
That yester-eve in smiling beauty lay,
Silently basking in the sun's last ray,
Have vanished all—as if they ne'er had been,
Save in the dreams that beautify the night
But melt away beneath the morning light;
Or as some lovely vision made to pass
In shifting hues across the Wizard's glass.

From the broad base of this calm mountain high
O'er grove, o'er town, o'er ocean's severing stream,
And o'er wide plains beyond, to where the sky
Is pierced by hoary Kedah, (lord supreme
Of all Malayan hills,) the white clouds lie,
Layer on layer, like leagues of stainless snow,
Opaque and fixed, as if in vain would blow
The summer winds, in vain the solar ray
Shine on their frozen forms.

While thus the scene,
Like Eastern bride beneath a jealous screen,
Curtaineth its varied charms, a stranger's eye
Might pass the desolate blank regardless by,

Or trace, from this hill's foot to far Malay
A desert lone 'neath winter's dreariest day,
And make the two lands one. 'Twere hard to deem
The blue sea lies between—that this fair Isle,
Though now so like a Lapland wild she seem,
Bears on her plain and valley fruits and flowers
Of taste and color matchless, secret bowers
Where blissful lovers meet, bright odorous trees,
(By careful Art disposed in regular file,)
That feast to faintness the enamoured breeze,
And sunny road, and cool umbrageous nook,
White cot, green hedge-row trim, and garden gay,
Oft taught by fairest hands its best array,
And feathery fern, tall palm, and silver brook,
And deathless summer hues!

Wait, Stranger, still,
And watch the gradual light on yonder hill;
For there the God of day with golden wand
Shall rise and touch the enchanted sea and land!
The snow-like shroud shall melt; the living scene
Out-burst in beauty; as when Night's fair queen,
A fond up-gazing votary to beguile,
Unfolds her cloud-pavilion with a smile;
Or as when some coy maiden lifts her veil
From love's own heaven, and lets her features bright,
That make the wondering stars above grow pale,
Beam on the soul in all their blushing light!

'Tis thus with human life! Its prospects fair
Oft, mantled in the dull mist of despair,
Seem lost eternally. But brighter hours
Return, like blue skies after summer showers,
When green leaves shine and fragrance fills the air.
Life sparkles, and its vapours far off roll
Beneath the sudden sunshine of the soul!

And then we blush to think how coward fright
Sees in a passing cloud the ghost of night,
Or deems when light and life a moment sever
The sun of hope hath left this world for ever.

There is no scene in nature, if we scan
It rightly, that may seem unmeant for man.
Profuse and fair, to charm the thoughtful eye,
Her living truths, her pictured precepts lie
On earth and ocean and the starry sky.

THE PARTED LOVER TO HIS MISTRESS.

I.

Not without cause those bitter tears,
Dear lady, at our parting fell:
When boding thoughts, like solemn seers,
Low-whispered 'twas *our last farewell*;—
How sadly since that fatal day
A hundred moons have passed away!

II.

We feel life's sweetest dreams are o'er,
We see the Atlantic waters vast
Between us roll, and ah! no more
May hope, that billowy barrier past,
To meet again on English land
With lip to lip, and hand to hand!

III.

Within the same wide world we stray,
The same bright planets still behold,
We see the same blue ocean play
And hear its mystic music old;
But oh, the mutual smile and word
No more is seen, no more is heard!

IV.

And yet we love! Still lives the flame
That made our mental sky so bright,
But, though its vital warmth's the same,
We mourn, alas! its lessened light;
As when the sweet moon drops her veil,
And cloud-divided stars grow pale.

V.

Undying wishes, weak and vain,
And passion's thorns without its flowers,
Deep yearnings, fraught with speechless pain,
And mournful memories, are ours;
Without the wild hopes love imparts,
Without the calm of vacant hearts.

VI.

Oh, that my Muse could breathe a strain
Of truthful power, and o'er the sea
Send all that stirs my heart and brain,
A living, speaking throng, to thee—
The dreams in mind's lone twilight lost,
The thoughts in troubled silence tost.

VII.

But there are thoughts no bard may tell,
Dreams that like doubtful shadows come,
And none e'er broke the mystic spell
That makes our deepest feelings dumb;
And written words are weak as air,
And ne'er laid human bosom bare.

VIII.

And thus is loneliness more lone—
A double solitude! The look—
The pressure of the hand—the tone
That love's soft tremor sweetly shook—
Fate now denies,—and what are spared
But thoughts untold and dreams unshared?

IX.

Alas! we live and love in vain!
For what for us hath life or love?
The solid earth, the moving main
Divide us, and the stars above
Mock pleasures past—hope's vanished store—
With which we watched their lights of yore!

DEATH.

"I leave you and all my other concerns, in the hands of that God who will certainly do that which is best for us both; but I can assure you, that if my prayers, and the prayers of a great many excellent friends here about, can keep you a few years longer from heaven, you will not be there very soon."—*Correspondence and Diary of Philip Doddridge, D. D.*

I.

We weep and tremble at the doom—
The dreadful doom of death;
'Tis sad amidst the fair earth's bloom
To yield this mortal breath!
The brave may proudly bear the pain—
That soon must pass away—
But oh! to think that ne'er again
Dear friends with eager hands shall greet,
Or fond hearts share Love's converse sweet,
O'erwhelms us with dismay!

II.

'Tis true that trusting faith is told
Of worlds beyond the sky,
And few there are so blind and bold
As dare such creed deny;
It is not that an after state,
Or dark or doubtful seems;

Alas! we shrink from future fate
Because we may not brook the thought
That hours with Life's endearments fraught
Are unreturning dreams!

III.

We find each earthly bliss alloyed,
Each smile foretells a tear,
But mortal breast would soon be cloyed
That never felt a fear;—
The beauty of the brightest beam
Is deepened by the shade—
Fairest the stars through darkness gleam—
The broad red sun of even-tide
Assumes a more imposing pride
In floating clouds arrayed.

IV.

Perfection hath not reigned on earth,
Nor ruled the human mind;
We pant not for diviner worth
Nor raptures more refined;
A mortal weakness makes us cling
To mortal forms alone;
We feel we cannot coldly fling
On Lethe's dark insatiate stream
The charms of Life's familiar dream,
And turn to scenes unknown.

V.

'Tis this that fills the final hour
With mournfulness and dread;
Love's tender ties and friendship's power
Avail not with the dead!
And though we meet to part no more
We shall not be the same;

The things that linked our hearts of yore
The damp cold hand of death divides,
And nought in holier realms abides
Of this terrestrial frame.

VI.

Thy radiant fields, Eternity!
The dreamer's breast alarm,
They echo not a human sigh
Nor own a human charm!
Thy skies the dazzled soul appal
And too severely glow;
Their hues no mortal days recall;—
And in thy bright and boundless space
Where only spirits dwell, we trace
No features loved below!

VII.

Oh, visions weak and idle fears
That fleshly hearts beguile,
At which methinks through pitying tears
Angelic faces smile!
Were that dark curtain drawn aside
This world and heaven between,
How all the painted mists of pride,
Delusive hopes, and fancies vain,
Would fade like twilight's shadowy train,
'Neath day's broad sky serene!

VIII.

For He who breathed us into birth,
And placed us here below,
Who made the dull mole under earth
A sense of pleasure know,
Who bade the bee suck luscious life
From plants that poison bear,

And gave to Man in fields of strife
A taste of peace—in heavenly bowers
Will surely grant diviner powers
Diviner bliss to share.

IX.

With God shall God-like spirits dwell,
With God-like rapture glow,
Nor on their dim deserted cell
One glance regretful throw;
And as the man out-grows the child
Each earth-freed soul mature,
With Life's mean gauds no more beguiled,
Shall proudly rise o'er mortal dreams,
And scatter, like a sun, the steams
Of this low soil impure!

SONNET.

With life and mystery all nature teems:—
A solitary leaf—a breath of air—
An inch of common earth—their burdens bear
Of tiny nations. The sun's glory beams
On scenes minute, more strange than strangest dreams
And never shines unfelt. No spot is bare,
No moment silent. Life is every where;
And this vast world is busier than it seems.
Oh! what a proud magnificent abode
Hath Man, the noblest living thing he sees!
Yet Science scans, by light that God bestowed,
A world of other worlds, and haply these
Have groves that ring with holier harmonies,
And beings with sublimer aims endowed.

THE FINAL TOAST.

A MASONIC SONG.

I.

"ARE your glasses charged in the West and South?" the Worshipful Master cries ;
"They are charged in the West,"—"They are charged in the South," are the Wardens' prompt replies ;
"Then to our final toast to-night full glasses fairly drain—
"HAPPY TO MEET—SORRY TO PART—HAPPY TO MEET AGAIN !"

II.

The Mason's social brotherhood around the festive board,
Reveal a wealth more precious far than selfish miser's hoard;
They freely share the priceless stores that generous hearts contain—
"HAPPY TO MEET—SORRY TO PART—HAPPY TO MEET AGAIN !"

III.

We work like Masons free and true, and when our task is done,
A merry song and cheering glass are not unduly won ;
And only at our farewell pledge is pleasure touched with pain—
"HAPPY TO MEET—SORRY TO PART—HAPPY TO MEET AGAIN !"

IV.

Amidst our mirth we drink "To all poor Masons o'er the world"—
On every shore our flag of love is gloriously unfurled ;
We prize each brother, fair or dark, who bears no moral stain—
"HAPPY TO MEET—SORRY TO PART—HAPPY TO MEET AGAIN !"

V.

The Mason feels the noble truth the Scottish peasant told,
That rank is but the guinea's stamp, the man himself's the gold;
With us the rich and poor unite and equal rights maintain—
"HAPPY TO MEET—SORRY TO PART—HAPPY TO MEET AGAIN!"

VI.

Dear brethren of the mystic tie, the night is waning fast—
Our duty's done—our feast is o'er—this song must be our last:—
Good-night—Good-night—once more, once more, repeat the farewell strain—
"HAPPY TO MEET—SORRY TO PART—HAPPY TO MEET AGAIN!"*

SONNET.—To ————

O DISTANT shape unseen! O voice unheard!
O mind unknown! and like a dream to me—
A sweet vague dream of heaven—while I to thee
Am less than air, a vision, or a word!
The magic syllrbles of thy name have stirred
My soul—and Fancy suddenly
Wide opes her gleaming doors. I seem to see
A radiant eye that hath not yet incurred
The penalty of care. I hear a tone
Of musical mirth.—Ah! that fair face is thine—
If she who gave thee life, not birth alone
Bestowed, but lineaments so like her own.
A few moons more, and this sweet dream of mine
May change into reality divine!

* This Song has been set to music, and may be had of Messrs. Burkingyoung and Company of Calcutta.

SONNET.

Dear G———, old friendships are a welcome theme
Yet mournful ever, for o'er bright years fled
We muse, and call up faces of the dead,
And pleasures past and many an early dream.
Then the long voyage on Life's mystic stream
Seems all too brief—we turn and gaze a-head
And watch the dim night gradually spread
While yet our wake is tinged with golden gleam.
How bland the breeze, how beautiful the wave,
We never felt as now, when o'er the sky
Sweet day begins to fade, and time's swift tide
Hath brought us nearer to that ocean wide—
Eternity—of mortal dreams the grave—
Vast treasury of the things that may not die!

THE ADOPTED SON.

A NORTH AMERICAN ANECDOTE.

I.

A fair youth 'neath a foreign sky
Stood calmly 'midst the foe:
One red man raised his hatchet high,
Another bent his bow.

II.

A double death, through heart and brain,
Threats that young hero true,
Though pale his brow, his lips retain
Proud curve and ruddy hue.

III.

The arrow drawn unto the head—
The hatchet in the air—
An instant more, the life-flood red
Shall stain his flaxen hair.

IV.

Oh, wondrous movement of the heart—
At nature's soft surprize !
Behold the elder savage start—
The tears are in his eyes !

V.

His loose bow drops—a life is gained—
He breathes a quick command—
His comrade's hatchet shines unstained,
And sinks his slackened hand.

VI.

"The stranger's son is fair and brave,"
The old man said, and sighed,
"*My* heart is vacant—in the grave
Now sleeps a Father's pride.

VII.

"Be mine—be mine, thou noble youth !
Thy blood shall not be shed,
So thou replace with filial truth
The long-lamented dead."

VIII,

They lead the fair-haired captive now
To woods and waters wide ;
He learns to bend the hunter's bow,
The light canoe to guide.

IX.

Old Winter gone, and Spring returned,
The red men sought again
The foreign tents, and fiercely yearned
The battle-axe to stain.

X.

The chieftain took the youth aside,
And shed a stern man's tears;
"My son," he said, "thou canst not hide
Thy true heart's hopes and fears."

XI.

"Beyond our woods and lakes and streams
Thy home-sick fancy strays,
And other faces haunt thy dreams,
And scenes of other days.

XII.

"Thy debt to me is more than paid
While grateful love survives—
Thou would'st not hurt this old gray head
To save a thousand lives.

XIII.

"I gave thee life—I give thee more—
A boon diviner far—
Thy freedom,—mine be as before
A sky without a star.

XIV.

"The sun divides the cloud of night,
But mine it cannot part,
And though the Spring seem warm and bright,
'Tis Winter in my heart.

XV.

"In yonder white-walled camp is one
Whose claim I must not share;—
Go—that *his* soul may feel the sun
And Spring's delightful air!"

THE LIFE-DEBT PAID.

A NORTH AMERICAN ANECDOTE.

I.

Word followed word—frown answered frown—
Out-burst the tempest dire—
Like meteors swift bright war-blades shone,
And dark eyes flashed like fire!

II.

Those foes were friends—from days of yore
Seemed one their double life—
Yet in the fraction of an hour
Their hearts were turned to strife.

III.

Though fiercely fought those warriors twain
Soon ceased their struggle dread;—
A dimmed axe smokes with blood and brain—
Low lies a lifeless head!

IV.

That sight hath touched the victor's heart,
So noble though so stern,
Yet none may see the tear-drop start,
Or sign of care discern.

V.

But grief is on his soul.—Before
The dead man's home he stands;—
"Friends of my friend! *his* life is o'er,
But mine is in your hands.

VI.

" As friendship's blood my weapon stains
The slayer's shall be shed ;
Oh, that the life within these veins
Might pass into the dead !

VII.

" I ask but one brief moon's reprieve,
To range the woods once more,
Lest one who ne'er made mortal grieve
Should want her winter store."

VIII.

The mourners signed their grave assent—
The moon rolled quickly by—
Motionless as a monument
Stands one prepared to die.

IX.

The stern crowd whisper—" *It is well.*"
The sharp axe riseth now—
Oh ! never hideous death-stroke fell
Upon a calmer brow !

SONG.

I.

O'ER the lake's smiling surface, when kissed by the moon-
On green hills at sun rise—in still woods at noon—
In isles, fairy-haunted—in caves on the shore—
Hath the poet oft heard mystic music before.

II.

But never, Oh, never, have tones such as thine—
So entrancing and dream-like—so truly divine—
Breathed a glory around, or with magical art
So bewildered his spirit or melted his heart.

III.

If the fragrance of Spring when the dew's on the ground,
And the fair hues of flowers were turned into sound—
If the rich glow of sun set—the gay tints of morn,
Could speak a sweet language to scenes they adorn—

IV.

If the looks of the lovely—if virtue and worth—
And all that is brightest and best on the earth—
Were but made in one musical spell to combine,
It would seem, dear Enchantress, an echo of thine!

TO A LADY.

Oh! were I, fairest friend, a poet true
I would not wish a prouder theme for praise
Than worth like thine. Yet when such meed is due
How poor must seem the most melodious lays!
It is not that thy flexile figure gives
At each sweet change the line that painters love;
It is not that the soul of beauty lives
In that large fawn-like eye; nor that above
Its liquid light the bow of Cupid bends;—
Nor that each lovely lineament transcends
The common mould; nor that thy voice's tone
Is music's magic —— Oh! not these alone
Would fix for life each friendship of an hour:—
But this thy praise—that with such sovereign power
As would inebriate the vulgar brain,
Unconscious of thy glory as a flower,
And guileless as a child, thy gentle reign
Ne'er gave a rival's heart a passing pain.

LIBERTY.*

I.

THE court of OPPRESSION is crowded—
The pale mob have crouched to his power—
The face of dear England is clouded—
The slave mocks her comfortless hour;
The noblest are goaded to madness,
The wise, and the free, and the brave:
And LIBERTY rising in sadness,
Like a spirit disturbed in the grave,
Reproachfully cries, through the gloom of the night,
"Have the race that I loved so deserted their right?"

II.

Oh, no! If the basest are bowing—
The coward, the courtier, and slave—
Yet still there are hearts that are glowing,
And hands that are ready to save;
And fatal and brief is the gladness
Of thy foes, mighty Queen of the Sea!
The despots that urge them to madness
Shall feel the revenge of the free;
While LIBERTY hails the triumphant endeavor
Of the race she hath loved so, and *will* love for ever!

---

* Written many years ago.

SOLITUDE

I.

I WAKE from dreams of pleasures past,
That came from slumber's mystic land ;—
Their light yet lingers—like the last
Sweet flush of glory, warm and bland,
When sinks the sun behind the hill,
Yet leaves his pathway brightened still.

II.

But as black night a shadow flings
O'er lingering daylight's latest gleam,
So raven care with ebon wings
Eclipseth each diviner dream,
'Till earth appears a temple lone,
The lights all quenched, the guests all gone.

III.

I sigh for some familiar face,
I sigh for tones that grief control,
I mourn the solitude of place
But more the solitude of soul ;
For when love lighteth not the gloom
The lone heart liveth in a tomb !

STANZAS.

TO A LADY, ON RECEIVING FROM HER A BEAUTIFUL FLOWER.

I.

A DEED of grace—a graceful gift—and graceful is the giver !
Like ear-rings on thine own fair head, these long buds hang and quiver :
Each tremulous taper branch is thrilled—flutter the wing-like leaves—
For thus, to part from thee, sweet maid, the floral spirit grieves!

II.

Rude gods in brass or gold enchant an untaught devotee—
Fair marble shapes, rich paintings old, are Art's idolatry ;
But nought e'er charmed a human breast like this small trembling flower,
Minute and delicate work divine of world-creative power.

III.

This flower's the Queen of all earth's flowers, and loveliest things appear,
Linked by some secret sympathy, in this mysterious sphere ;
The giver and the gift seem one, and thou thyself art nigh,
When this glory of the garden greets thy lover's raptured eye.

MYSTERY.

THERE is strange life in things inanimate,
Or things so called, and in this mortal state
An immortality! There are no bounds
To life but MYSTERY, and that surrounds
All forms of earth, and, with its dread control,
For ever checks the proud impatient soul,
Whose aims at hidden things are grasps at air,
Whose eager gaze is but a blind man's stare.

Bewildered with blank nothingness—(a dense,
Objectless glare)—how oft a horrid sense
Of loneliness and littleness prevails,
While the frame trembles and the spirit quails.

But, oh! this dream-delirium may not last—
We wake—and when the hideous spell is past
The mystery remains, but not the fear:—
We know that God himself is everywhere!

And while this faith can animate and bless
We feel not lone, forlorn, and fatherless.
With humbled thought, calm hope, and sweet content,
We cease to sigh for things for man unmeant,
But wait the uplifting of the curtain vast
By hands unseen around the wide world cast.

STANZAS.

I.

I LOVE on summer mornings bright
  To see the sun's uprise,
And watch the clouds, late hid in night,
  Assume a thousand dyes.

II.

I love to see the meadows green
  Bedropped with golden flowers,
And hear the low winds creep between
  The perfume-breathing bowers.

III.

I love to see the lucid stream
  Steal all unruffled by,
And, fair as Fancy's fairest dream,
  Reflect a softened sky.

IV.

I love to hear the sudden sound
  Of birds amid the trees,
The sear leaves rustling on the ground,
  The pleasant hum of bees.

V.

I love to see, like hills of snow,
  The white unmoving clouds,
And thin gray vapors gliding slow,
  Like silent shapes in shrouds.

VI.

I love to hear o'er echoing dales
The close air thunder-riven,
I love to hear the roaring gales
That lift vast seas to heaven.

VII.

All nature's sights and sounds command
My soul's quick sympathy,
The soft, the mystic, and the grand,
Have each a charm for me.

VIII.

And yet I never saw the scene,
The sound I never heard,
So fair as WOMAN's face serene,
So sweet as WOMAN's word!

IX.

If prison walls shut out the sky,
Yet bade not her depart,
I'd see a sun in WOMAN's eye,
An Eden in her heart.*

---

* These verses are little more than another version of the leading thought in the Sonnet on page 347. They were written to please a friend, who objected to the Sonnet form.

LINES TO THE MEMORY OF DAVID HARE.*

[TO BE RECITED BY A HINDU.]

O'ER the vast waste of waters—from a land
Small but renowned—a proud undaunted band,
Stirred with the thirst of conquest and of gold,
Came—traded—triumphed! History never told
Of monarch-merchants—heroes wandering far—
A stranger tale of traffic or of war.

But can the busy mart, the battle field
The dearest wealth—the brightest triumph yield?
Ah no! e'en now our generous rulers claim
A prouder guerdon and a purer fame.
Though gold was gained and martial glory won,
They knew their noblest task was not begun.
They held our lands, but could not hold our hearts,
Till, changing force for kindness, arms for arts,
They proffered the rich wisdom of the West,
And poorest minds with priceless treasures blest!

In this divinest duty many a heart,
With holy zeal, hath well sustained its part—
All these our guides—an honor to their land—
To our's a blessing—grateful love command;
But in the glorious list, beyond compare,
In types of light, behold the name of HARE!

Ah, warm philanthropist! ah, faithful friend!
Thy life devoted to one generous end—
To bless the Hindu mind with British lore
And truth's and nature's faded lights restore—

* Written at the request of several Native gentlemen.

If for a day that lofty aim was crost,
You grieved, like Titus, that a day was lost.
Alas ! it is not now a few brief hours
That fate withholds—a heavier grief o'erpowers
A nation whom you loved as if your own—
A life that gave the life of life is gone !

Yet oh ! my countrymen, why weep in vain ?
If aught may cause an earth-freed spirit pain,
'Tis when it sees in fond hearts left below
An unresigned and unavailing woe.
Be sighs above the grave breathed forth no more,
The gods are deaf when men the past deplore,
But let a friend's true merit best be proved
By imitative zeal in acts he loved.
His memory thus with loftiest lessons rife
May well complete the purpose of his life,
And while our Hindu youth Mind's blessings share
They'll learn to venerate the name of HARE !

SONNET.

THIS world is beautiful ! Oh, dearest friend,
Its glory pass not with regardless eye ;—
Green fields, bright streams, deep vales, and mountains high,
Rainbows that o'er the wide blue ocean bend
Their many-colored arch, the stars that send
Their mystic light through countless leagues of air—
Are they not all unutterably fair ?
Can art's proud triumphs e'er with these contend ?
You gaze on palaces and crowns, and own
Such baubles please. You bow to mortal kings,
Forgetful of *their* King, whose glorious throne
Mocks man's conception. Alas ! earthly things,
Save those suggesting nobler, leave their stings
In the sad heart when youth and hope are flown !

STANZAS

TO A LADY SINGING.

I.

I CLOSE my willing eyes, but not to sleep—
The world is all shut out, but 'tis not night—
Though tears unbidden start, I do not weep—
My soul is rapt in visions of delight.

II.

Thy voice is like the music of a dream,
And dream-like is its power. That silver spell
Enthrals the heart with happiness supreme,
With thoughts too sweet for mortal tongue to tell.

III.

O, gifted lady ! O, enchantress fair !
O, honied lip ! what witcheries are thine !
The soul of music breathes upon the air,
And works a wondrous miracle divine !

IV.

'Tis sunrise upon Eden ! What a burst
Of light and beauty, glorious as of yore !
The land a lovely woman lost us first
One of her loveliest daughters can restore.

"A MISERABLE SCENE."

The silver clash of fountains,
In shady vallies heard—
The sheep-bell on the mountains—
The song of matin bird—
The glassy feet of Ocean
In the white cliff's pebbled cave—
The fluttering sweet commotion
When winds the green wood wave—
The sound of rushing rivers—
The murmur of small rills,
Soft as the voice that quivers
When tears the glad eye fills—
Loud trumpets from high towers—
And lutes on sleeping lakes—
Love's whisper in close bowers—
Joy's laugh in sunny brakes—
A proud young mother singing
To please her playful child—
Shrill shouts o'er green hills ringing
Of boys with rapture wild,—
O, musical contradictions
Of Discontent and Spleen,
Of the Bigot's gloomy fictions
Of "*a miserable scene!*"

STANZAS.

THE radiant dawn, the year's fresh spring,
New leaves and opening flowers,
Are lovelier than the loveliest thing
That breathes of later hours.

How beautiful the first sweet light
To human features given,
For infant innocence is bright
With glory brought from Heaven !

The golden locks, the smooth fair face,
The round limbs sleek and small,
With witchery of unconscious grace
The gazer's heart enthral.

A lovely and a loving child
That smiles in sinless glee,
Hath oft the sternest breast beguiled
To sweet idolatry.

When like a cherub from above,
Thus smiled my own glad boy,
My fond heart overflowed with love,
And almost ached with joy.

And Oh ! his sister angels fair
With all their winning ways
Would make me quite forget that care
Could darken mortal days.

Those forms have passed beyond the seas,
And now no more I hear
Light laughs, like happy harmonies,
From some diviner sphere.

In silent rooms my slow tread wakes
Fit sounds for sorrow's mood ;
Through my soul's cloud no sunbeam breaks
And home's a solitude !

Calcutta, 1840.

SONNET.

It is not fear that fills the poet's mind
With images of death, but love profound
For all that tread the flower-embroidered ground,
For all that float upon the wave or wind.
Such love broods ever on the lot assigned
To mortal life. The charms of sight and sound—
Faces divine—green fields—and rills that bound
O'er pebbles bright, or in dim coverts find
A tone responsive in the whispering trees,—
All nature—all mankind—all breathing things,
Are precious to the Muse. To part from these
Is pain unspeakable ; and Death whose wings
Shut out the sun, and make the warm blood freeze,
E'en o'er the undying soul a shadow flings.

STANZAS

COMPOSED FOR A RECITATION AT A FAREWELL PARTY.

I.

THE young and old—the high and low
Have all a human heart ;
The coldest of our kind must know
Some form or scene at which to glow,
From which 'tis pain to part.

II.

Familiar things—a bird—a flower—
A river, grove, or hill,
If linked to pleasant dreams, have power
When fate proclaims the farewell hour
The tender heart to thrill.

III.

A scene that charms no stranger's eye—
The simplest household ware—
May breathe perchance of bliss gone by,
Or bid the pensive bosom sigh
With retrospective care.

IV.

If common things thus stir the heart—
If every heart endures
Some touch of pain when doomed to part,
What pangs through tenderer breasts must dart !
What pangs, dear friends, are yours !

V.

The charms the twilight past endears
For you no more may smile ;
You look your last through farewell tears
On dearest friends of happiest years,
On Ocean's loveliest Isle.*

VI.

Yet grieve not as the ungrateful grieve
With idle discontent ;
To hope no cherished thing to leave—
A lasting web of bliss to weave—
For man was never meant.

VII.

Ye need not weep as some may weep
Who pass us like the wind,
And while their distant course they keep,
O'er sultry land or billowy deep,
Leave no dear trace behind.

VIII.

Oh ! look around this festal board—
How many a heart is here
The treasures of the past to hoard,
Your deeds of kindness to record,
Your memory to revere !

Penang, December, 1842.

---

* Penang.

STANZAS.

I.

How beautiful are hill and dale, and meadow, grove, and river!
The bright waves clash with silver sound, the green leaves shine
and quiver.
I hear the sheep-bell's distant tone, the birds are loud and gay,
And fragrance floating on the breeze proclaims approaching May!

II.

How beautiful are hill and dale, and meadow, grove, and river!
Methinks on this Arcadian ground 'twere bliss to dwell for ever;
Not fairer hues could Fancy's self to this sweet scene impart,
To charm the painter's raptured eye or poet's panting heart!

III.

How beautiful are hill and dale, and meadow, grove and river!
Oh! what a rich domain hath man! How bounteous is the Giver!
If from this earthly paradise might care and sin be driven,
Oh! who for sweeter home would yearn, or seek a happier heaven?

AN ACROSTIC.

HATH she not an aspect fine,
Air and features half divine;
Riches misers could not measure,
Rarest of the best heart's treasure;
Innocence and friendship true?—
Eh! says HARRIET, tell me who?
This, sweet Lady, this is *you!*

THE RIVER VOYAGE.

Slow steals our Indian boat
Up rain-fed river wide ;
Against the breeze we float,
Against the rushing tide ;
And breast the strife of wind and stream
Without the conquering aid of steam.

II.

Swart forms in lengthened file
Along the green bank wind,
The tight-drawn goon* the while
To shouldered bamboos joined ;—
Patiently 'neath the burning sun
On plod they 'till the day is done.

III.

A toilsome journey theirs,
An easy voyage ours,
And yet fantastic cares
Have equalized the dowers ;
Theirs the light heart though heavy limb,
But ours the wearied soul and dim.

---

* The rope from the mast-head to the trackers on shore.

LINES

WRITTEN IN AN ALBUM PRESENTED TO A LADY BY THE AUTHOR.

Lady, when o'er these leaves thy bright eye strayeth,
Say, can thy heart forget the friendly giver?
When on the stream of life that ne'er delayeth
Our barks part company, perchance for ever,
Say, wilt thou then remember one whose sorrow
At the sad thought of severance, is sincerer
Than many a bard's who grief's low voice may borrow
And charm with sweeter sounds the cheated hearer?

Time rusheth onward like a rapid river;
Against its furious force no mortal wadeth;
And like a wave on which the sunbeams quiver
Each bright-faced pleasure lifts its form and fadeth.
There is no permanence for earthly glory
Or earthly bliss, and dearest friends must sever;
The fair, the brave, the youthful, and the hoary,
Have proved alike that joy is stable never.

And is there no dear resting place for *feeling*
Amid the giddy whirl of life's mutation?
Ah, yes! for love's and friendship's fond revealing
The true heart is a fixed and holy station.
I'll seek not then for Fortune's sweet beguiling,
Nor fear her frown, if thou'lt remember me;
While in thine heart fair Friendship sitteth smiling
Lady, I'll think exultingly of thee.

STANZAS.

I.

The sudden throbs, the starting tears,
The tumult of the soul,
When some bright dream of happier years
Is shrouded in the storm of fears,
Can stoic pride control?

II.

Some cares there are that none may still,
And thoughts that none may share,
And incommunicable ill,
And pangs that silent bosoms thrill
Are those we least can bear.

III.

This clouded life is doubly dark
To him whose path is lone
And he whom Hope's far-glimmering spark
Ne'er leads to Faith's unfailing mark
Is quickly overthrown.

IV.

He sees with wild delirous eye,
And strives with awful dreams;
He may not mingle sigh with sigh;
To him affection's soft reply
Almost a mockery seems.

A MASONIC SONG.*

I.

How sacred is the mystic Craft,
That e'en in foreign lands,
With ties of true fraternal love,
Can join opposing hands!

II.

The blood-red arm of ruthless war,
As struck by spell divine,
Falls nerveless as a child's before
The Mason's secret sign.

III.

He finds 'mid foreign crowds a friend,
A home 'neath every sky;
His countless brethren ne'er disdain
Their kindred, nor deny.

IV.

For that vast family are taught
To form one social band,
And bear the unbroken chain of love
To earth's remotest land.

V.

No narrow bounds of creed or clime,
Of language or of hue,
Contract the Mason's sympathies
When suffering brethren sue.

---

* Set to music by W. H. Hamerton.

VI.

To all alike, in weal or woe,
A brother's smile is shown,
Whose hearts the same great father love,
The same Great Master own ;

VII.

Who breathe to one Grand Architect
The same submissive prayer ;
Who live within the compasses,
And act upon the square.

SONG.

I.

Oh! Lady, in that voice of thine
Is magic most enthralling ;—
Yet, Syren, all those notes divine
Are but to ruin calling ;—
Ah me!
That tones like music of the spheres
Should cheat the truest heart that hears!
Ah me!

II.

Oh! Lady, cease those liquid notes,
The soul of passion wooing ;—
For never thy rich music floats
Except for man's undoing ;—
Ah me!
That sounds so sweet and soft as those
Should break for aye the heart's repose!
Ah me!

SONG.

I.

As quickly as the light leaf shivers
When Zephyr haunts the bower ;
As quickly as the needle quivers
Beneath the magnet's power ;
My true heart vibrates at the sound
Of thy sweet voice divine,
And yearns with tenderness profound
To blend itself with thine.

II.

Not long the storm-vexed stream could dally
On yon rough mountain's breast ;
It swiftly wound into the valley,
Its verdant place of rest ;
And thus o'er wild ambition's height
Full soon I ceased to roam,
And sought with thee the calm delight,
The blest repose of home,

STANZAS.

The skies may wear their brightest blue,
The fields their freshest green,
And things of every form and hue
But breathe of bliss serene;
Yet all that sights like these reveal
This sad heart must disown,
For oh! I cannot choose but feel
In loveliest scenes *alone!*

If thus when light and glory bless
This strangely varying sphere,
I may not taste the loveliness
Since no kind heart is near;
When o'er the landscape shadows steal
And low winds deeply moan,
Alas! how sadder still to feel
In that dark hour *alone!*

Awhile I haunt the glittering halls,
Where youth and beauty shine,
Where gorgeous mirrors on bright walls
Reflect each form divine;
And yet my heart I coldly seal
And inly weep and groan;
For oh! 'tis terrible to feel
In joyous crowds *alone!*

If thus I bear amidst the gay,
  Where soft eyes magic dart,
Where night is made more bright than day,
  This solitude of heart,
'Tis worse to home's still roof to steal,
  Where once was heard the tone
Of love and joy—and then to feel
  E'en there—e'en there—*alone!*

SONNET TO THE MOON.

SUGGESTED BY A LADY OF THE NAME OF IRIS.

OH silver-suited Lady of the sky,
So bright yet pensive, passionless yet kind,
Pure-thoughted and serene (for such the mind
We read upon that brow); if ever I
Gaze on thy form of light irreverently
May all the Muses scorn me; may Fate blind
Mine inward sense of vision, firmly bind
My heart in icy fetters, and up-dry
The source of pleasant tears. But if my breast
Still owns a votary's passion, list my prayer—
Smile fondly on the feminine shape and fair
Here at my side, in vari-colored vest.
Sweet LUNA, greet a sister-spirit—know
'Tis IRIS—goddess of the radiant bow!

A LOVER'S THOUGHT.

'Tis true that we no more may meet,
Our paths are far apart ;
I may not hear thy lips repeat
The dictates of thine heart ;—
Yet though divided thus we stray
We share love's golden dream,
As 'neath the same unbroken ray
The clouds, though parted, gleam !

STANZAS FOR MUSIC.

I.

'Tis hard to say that we must part—
At least 'tis so to me ;
For long and faithfully my heart
Hath pined with love for thee.
Oh maid, too deeply dear !
Canst thou, with greeting calm and bland,
Thus lightly press my trembling hand,
And part without a tear ?

II.

Alas ! how cold all kindness seems
To hearts that passion burns,
Save that which kindles love's bright dreams,
Or sigh for sigh returns !
Those tranquil smiles repel—
Oh, didst thou feel as I feel now
Thou couldst not wear so calm brow,
So calmly say, farewell !

METRICAL LEVITIES.

THE RIVALS.

I.

I WISH, Mamma, you'd tell that man
To keep his money—and his distance;
For let him tease me all he can
He'll never conquer my resistance.
He slyly pinched my cheek one day—
(The wretch!) and tried to look most charming,
While I felt any thing but gay,
And thought his fondness quite alarming.

II.

"Come now," said I, "I'll test your love;"—
[The rich old hunks looked pleased and tender,]
"Ah! Dearest!" cried he, "Darling! Dove!
What service could I fail to render?"
"I care not for your purse or place,"
Said I, "for these could charm me never;
But grant one favor—hide your face,
And let us say farewell for ever."

III.

He stared and stammered—stamped and swore—
You would have thought he'd kill your daughter—
'Twas sound and fury—nothing more—
Except of English words a slaughter.
At last I heard the dolt exclaim,
"I know your heart's in secret chiming,
The praise of one whose wealth is fame,
A pale-faced Poet, proud of rhyming."

IV.

"Take *that!*" I cried, and boxed his ear;
He paused, and scowled in sullen frenzy;
"Your mother, Miss," said he, "shall hear
Of this, and of your *dear* Mackenzie!"
And then he bolted from the room,
And banged the door as if he'd break it;
But what care I for all his fume?
Let one who loves his money take it.

V.

You know, Mamma, my heart's my own,
And that sweet bard the old brute mentioned
Is but a *friend.* His worth is known.
No other man, though bribed or pensioned,
Though decked with ribbands, gems, or gold,
Could ever wake in me the feeling
With which I silently behold
His kindled eye his soul revealing.

VI.

I do not *love* him—but 'tis sweet
To hear divine words breathed divinely,
And Oh! it is a heavenly treat
To see his face light up so finely!

What thought is in his forehead high !
What genius in his glances glowing !
And really when I hear him sigh,
I feel as if my life were going !

VII.

I do not *love* him, but I own
I like his tender verses dearly,
And somehow when I'm all alone
I feel his absence most severely.
Perhaps, indeed, one day, who knows,
But in some silent walk and shady,
He *may* breathe forth a lover's vows,
And I become a Poet's lady !

VIII.

I wish, Mamma, you would not quiz,
You vex me with your wicked smiling ;
You think I'm smitten with his phiz,
And that his Muse is too beguiling ?
Well, have it all your own way, then,
And, if it will afford you pleasure,
I'll own he is the best of men,
And that his heart would be a treasure.

IX.

"Behold the gentle minstrel comes !—
You love each other, and you show it,"
(Exclaims Mamma,) "so no more *hums* ;
Charles, take her !—Mary, here's your Poet !—
Exchange your vows and laugh at sorrow,
Indulge in love's delicious frenzy,
And Mary shall be styled to-morrow
The pretty Mrs. Charles Mackenzie."

STANZAS.

ON A LATE ATTEMPT TO SHOOT THE QUEEN.

The Queen's luckless soldier for twelve-pence a day,
As a butt for a bullet must stand,—
But he's not of the same flesh and blood you will say
As the lady that rules o'er the land.

But the fair one herself, though she sits on a throne,
Is exposed to an enemy's lead;
Each pot-boy that sports an old gun of his own
Can take a pot-shot at her head.

Yet where's the great difference 'twixt Soldier and Queen?
The difference is all in the pay;
His is less than two guineas a month it is seen,
And her's is a thousand a day!

That the last's a good salary all must confess,
And yet I suspect there are many
Men, matrons, boys, maidens, who would not take less
To stand the pot-shots of a zany.

And really the fair living target displays
A courage that charms the beholder:
John Bull must not grumble at what he now pays
For he'll ne'er get a better or bolder.

Calcutta, July 18, 1842.

A BIT OF DOGGREL.

ON MEETING SOME LADIES ON THE SIDE OF A MOUNTAIN IN PENANG AT A LATE HOUR ON A STORMY EVENING.

A PALE and feeble invalid
Reduced to life's extremest need,
The red blood stagnant in his veins,
Passed from Bengala's sultry plains,
And sought on lofty Bel Retiro*
The vigor of a mountain hero.

The search was vain—the chance seemed lost,
Heat had performed the effect of frost—
The stream that from the heart once leapt,
Within its purple channels slept ;
'Twas feared that health and cheerful spirit
No more that mortal might inherit.

He who once fainted in the sun
Now shivered in the shade,—he won
But change of ill from change of scene,
Increased by sadness and chagrin.

His neighbour (a just British Cadi,)
In concert with his courteous lady,
Took pity on the lonely man,
And said—"Pray cheer up if you can,
And, just as often as you're able,
Be present at our social table."

* The hill in Penang on which the Government House is situated.

Sick as he was the poor wretch smiled,
And felt his inmost heart beguiled ;
Though bleak the wind, and o'er the head
Of the old hill a dim fog spread,
And night's thick curtain like a pall
Began upon the scene to fall,
He threw his cloak upon his shoulder,
And strove to feel less chilled, and bolder ;
But his teeth chattered, and his mind
Misgave him, as through fog and wind
He toiled his way, and missed it too,
And wondered what on earth to do.

Suddenly flashed upon his sight
What seemed a vision of the night,
A troop of spirits of the air—
Trembled his limbs—up-rose his hair !
He paused—they neared him—and at once
The mystery cleared—the sickly dunce
Mistook familiar forms and bright
For awful ghosts that haunt the night,
Though never lovelier shapes were seen
In sunlight on a summer green.

Calcutta, July 18, 1842.

A SECOND BIT OF DOGGREL.

ON A SECOND MEETING WITH THE SAME LADIES UNDER SIMILAR CIRCUMSTANCES.

THE rain was pouring,
The wind was roaring,
The mist hung over the mountain;
The forest groaned,
And the wild beasts moaned,
And thundered the swollen fountain;—
And o'er the dread scene
Like an Eastern queen
When she leads her dark hosts to war,
With a troop of clouds
Like ghosts in shrouds
Came the Night in her ebon car!

A sick man sat
'Neath his lonely shed,
With an old green hat
On his hoary head;
And a cloak round his shivering frame was cast,
For a broken lattice let in the blast.

Strange forms he had met on the bleak hill's side
Dimly through midnight mist descried,
And trembled his limbs, and up-rose his hair,
For he deemed they rode on the stormy air;—
But this wild night, between four walls,
While the storm without
Made the horrible rout
That the stoutest heart appals,

He sat alone
As still as a stone!—

As the fierce winds battled
The casements rattled
With sounds of fear
On his startled ear;
And the lightning flashed through the glittering rain,
As he looked through the brightened window pane,
And he saw what had nearly turned his brain!
The spirits in white
Of a former night,
Dimly descried on the bleak hill's side,
Now froze his blood again.

The creaking door flies open wide
And in the white-robed spirits glide.

"Avaunt ye fiends of mystic ill,
Fair as ye seem yet fearful still!"
The sick man feebly cried,
"Where shall I stray?—where shall I dwell?—
Ye cross my way—ye haunt my cell!"

And then the same enchanting voice
That bade his soul before rejoice,
And made him laugh away his fear,
Like the silver sound of a pebbled stream,
Or the music heard in a blissful dream,
Fell sweetly on his ear.

The poor sick man though charmed was wild,
Bewildered as a cheated child,
He knew not whether to laugh or weep,
Or if he himself were awake or asleep;

He could not tell—he was under a spell ;
And, half in doubt and half in despair,
He said—" Are ye forms of earth or air ?
Are ye bent on deeds of good or ill ?
If ministers kind,
Why in mist and wind
Do ye wander at night on the stormy hill ?
Why cross my path ?
Why haunt my cell ?
Do ye come in love ?—do ye come in wrath ?
Oh quickly tell !

" Methinks I see familiar forms,
Methinks I see familiar faces ;—
But why thus glide through nightly storms
Where many an evil phantom paces ?

" Ye smile like sweetest friends of mine,
Ye look like beings half divine ;
But fiends on dread designs intent
Assume what shape they will,
While forms for holiest goodness meant
Conceal demoniac ill."

He said—and then the feeble wight
Fell back, and fainted with affright.

At this the lovely ladies gazed
On the sick man's face, as if amazed ;—
Each touched with taper finger fair
Her forehead between her parted hair,
And with a significant solemn air
Exclaimed——" THE MAN IS CRAZED !"

MATRIMONY.

A SPRUCE beau gives a belle a ring—
Awhile that beau will by her dangle
Like an apron string ;
But soon the belle begins to jangle,
And the fickle beau to wrangle,
Then oh, what a thing,
For vain repentant tears
The matrimonial noose appears,
Like a thorny laurel
Lined with many a sting !
Then how the lovers snarl and quarrel !
Perhaps about their purses ;
(Proving matrimony
Truly matter o' money)
And with cutting words,
Sharp as any swords,
Pointed as Pope's verses,
Each other maim and mangle.
Each year but worse and worse is,
And with bitterest curses,
They think of that close tie
Which makes so many sigh,
From which there's no retreat,
Which only true love can make sweet,
And only death can disentangle.

PATHETIC STANZAS.

TO A LADY, ON HER JOCOSELY DECLINING TO INVITE THE AUTHOR TO DINNER, ON THE PLEA THAT HER TABLE WAS FULL.

(A Parody on the Beggar's Petition.)

I.

PITY the sorrows of a poor old man,
Whose shrunken shanks oft bear him to your door;
Say not you cannot ask him when you *can*,
Nor say your table hath not one place more.

II.

A board as richly spread—a roof as gay—
Each sweet domestic comfort—once were mine,
But now that wife and babes are far away,
'Tis misery indeed at home to dine!

III.

Hard is the fate of a lone married man
Whose skilful house-wife treads a distant shore,
While he, sad wretch, must manage as he can,
And all the pleasures of the past deplore.

IV.

These lantern jaws my wretchedness bespeak;
This hairless head says coming years are few;
This sunken eye, weak voice, and pallid cheek,
Show what bad cooks and consamahs may do.

V.

Your mansion stands on fashionable ground,
In Middleton Street, behind Chowringhee Road ;
'Tis rich with every charm of sight and sound,
'Tis cheerful Hospitality's abode.

VI.

But here in Fiddledunga (*bless* their eyes !)
I see but copper-colored strangers grin,
And hear on festal days the boisterous cries
Of drunkards dancing to the tom-tom's din.

VII.

Oh ! ask me to your hospitable dome ;
Oh ! say no more your pleasant table's full ;
Oh ! take me from my own detested home,
For I am lone and miserably dull !

VIII.

Feast me with tupsee mutchlee, fresh as morn,
And pastry light as air, and dewy fruit ;
Let feminine faces sweet your rooms adorn,
And let me hear piano, voice, and flute.

IX.

Oh ! bid mine eager ears drink heavenly sounds,
My lips sip nectar, none but thou can'st make,
And innocent mirth, that thought and care confounds,
My sides with laughter's sweet convulsion shake.

X.

Pity the sorrows of a poor old man,
Whose shrunken shanks oft bear him to your door ;
Say not you cannot ask him when you *can*,
Nor say your table hath not one place more !

Fiddledunga, April 20, 1842.

A LOVER TO HIS MISTRESS.

CRUEL creature!
Fair of feature,
Cold by nature,
Thus you treat your
Lovers every one!
Well revealing
Want of feeling,
Calmly stealing,
Heart's wild reeling
'Neath the deeds you've done-
Deeds disgraceful!
All your face full
Of such graceful
Charms divine!

Souls beguiling
With sweet smiling,
Is the style in
Which you shine;
But though pretty,
Wise and witty,
You've no pity
For a bleeding heart!
You're a debtor
For a letter,
And you'd better
Written balm impart,
Or with curses,
Weaved in verses,

Or, what worse is,
Truth in prose,
I'll expose
Your wicked wiles ;
And tell people
Who may sleep ill
After your sweet smiles,
That ague follows the fierce fever
Of the hearts you win:
That you're like a lovely river,
Which, bright outside, but cold within,
Makes the bather shiver.

STANZAS.

WRITTEN IN AN ALBUM.

I CANNOT turn these varied leaves
Without a tear, without a sigh,
Yet though my darkened spirit grieves,
Lady—I scarce could tell thee why.

" Fantastic fool!" the fair one says,
" Such cares as thine I'll ne'er take part in,
The grief your idiot Muse displays
Is all my eye and Betty Martin."

APPENDIX

OF

MISCELLANEOUS PAPERS.

BRIEF NOTES OF A BRIEF TRIP.

THE OVERLAND PASSAGE FROM ENGLAND TO INDIA.*

May 6, 1845.—Left St. Helier's, Jersey, at ¼ to 10 A. M Touched at Guernsey at noon—Arrived in Southampton Docks at ¼ to 9 P. M.

I made the passage in the *Wonder*, a beautiful little iron steamer of 140 horse power—her tonnage 400. She can be made to run 19 or 20 knots an hour. She was seldom at much more than half speed on our little trip, because she had met with an accident which had slightly injured the machinery. The cabins are very elegantly fitted up, and she is compact and comfortable, with two exceptions—one is that the passenger is obliged, in the roughest weather, to pass up to the deck from the cuddy and dive down again to reach the private berths, which, at night, especially in rain and thick darkness, is no trifling inconvenience; the other, is the extreme vibration, occasioned by her size being too small in proportion to her power. The passengers seem affected with St. Vitus's dance and, when seated at table, look like so many Chinese figures shaking their heads in unison.

* This Journal may be regarded as a sort of supplement to *the Anglo-Indian Passage*, published by Messrs. Madden and Malcolm, London.—The places described in that book are here either passed over altogether or touched upon very slightly. I make no apology for the extremely superficial character of this journal, for what can be expected from the notes of a traveller whirled over sea and land with an almost breathless rapidity? For advice to overland travellers, and numerous minute but useful details, I venture to refer the reader to the *Anglo-Indian Passage*.

Weary and half dead with sickness and extreme cold, we were all very anxious to get on shore, but the Custom House officers and their Regulations are more rigid and severe at Southampton than at any other English port, and when an officer came on board, though he at once gave us permission to land, he for some time refused to allow any passenger to take a single article on shore, except the clothes upon his back, as it was too late to receive and examine our luggage at the Custom House. This officer was a short, thick, grizzle-headed, abrupt, consequential, vulgar fellow. The steward introduced him with "Here's the gentleman who will examine the passengers' luggage." "I'll examine no luggage at this time of night," said the officer; "I only come to see that no passenger lands with contraband goods about him." *At last he consented, after numerous* and urgent entreaties, to examine carpet bags, that passengers might take their immediate necessities on shore with them. A passenger, enquiringly pointed to his portmanteau, in which were all the articles of his toilet; he had no carpet bag. "I'm d—d if I'll examine that to-night," said the Jack in office; so because the unhappy passenger's traps were enclosed in leather instead of carpet, he was prevented from landing them, though he had wished to start by the first train for London on the following morning. Another passenger was very earnest in calling speedy attention to his carpet bag. The officer plunged a knowing hand into its miscellaneous contents. After diving to the very bottom of the bag, the official digits, so well practised in their duty, brought up several captures. Inexpressibles, shirts and stockings, each succinctly rolled up, one after the other, were made to unfold a tale of smuggling. In the core of one roll was found a packet of segars, in another a pound of tea, and in a third, a pint of brandy. "You have an elegant little supply of prohibited articles in this bag, Sir," said the officer, "and as the bag is so well stocked, I suppose we shall find your larger luggage turned to still better account. All these little articles already discovered must go to the Custom House, where you can attend and claim them to-

morrow. In the meanwhile, you may go on shore with a lightened bag." I never in my life saw a man look so truly foolish and uncomfortable as our petty smuggler. How strange, that for so paltry an advantage or profit a man should risk so mortifying an exposure! I do not believe that our fellow passenger had any exciseable articles in his larger packages; but he calculated that a carpet bag would escape examination. The gentleman who owned the portmanteau again urged the officer to examine it, and enquired whether there was any essential difference between a bag and a portmanteau, that one should be passed and the other stopped. "Don't talk to me, Sir," was the answer, "don't talk to me. I go by the regulations."

I had two favorite English larks with me, and I wished to take them on shore, as I was unwilling to leave them to the tender mercy of the cats on board, and a careless steward. The officer at first refused to pass them, but when it was very respectfully urged that he could see at a glance every corner of their cages, and that their wings were too small to conceal articles of value, and their throats too narrow to swallow pairs of French gloves in walnut shells, he was graciously pleased to put his sign manual on the cages with a piece of chalk. He reminded me that there was a duty on birds, but did not press for payment of it. I landed, and got into an omnibus, which, even at that late hour, was waiting to take passengers from the steamers to the different parts of the town. A curious illustration of the sharp practise of the Custom House myrmidons was presented on this occasion. When I arrived at the hotel to which I had directed the coachman to drive me, and was stepping out of the vehicle, a man demanded the duty for the birds. It was only a few pence.

At 6 o'clock A. M. the following morning (Wednesday, May 7th) I visited the substantial well-built Custom House in the docks, and, I must say, that I found the officers considerate and polite. The examination of my trunks was very superficial—little more than a mere matter of form. These people seem to

know almost intuitively when it is necessary to be severe and when they may be polite. A few minutes after they had passed my trunks so civilly, they overhauled another passenger's packages with very little ceremony, and their discoveries soon justified their freedom.

Left Southampton by the *Fast Train* at 11 A. M.—arrived at Nine Elms at ¼ to 2 P. M.—in less than 3 hours! This is travelling indeed! And yet, though I passed over the ground with such amazing rapidity, there was no sort of discomfort. I could read a newspaper's smallest print, or mark the peculiarities of the scenery, without the least difficulty, What clock-work certainty of time—what magical speed—what perfect ease in this mode of travelling! It is certainly one of the greatest marvels and triumphs of this scientific age; and yet, perhaps, that which now excites our wonder, will in another century be thrown into insignificance by a thousand mightier miracles.*

As thus, after my long absence from England, I smoothly glided, as in a sledge, over the level iron road, with such ease and magical rapidity—from the pretty and cheerful town of Southampton to the greatest city of the civilized world—I gave way to child-like wonder and child-like exultation. What a quick succession of lovely landscapes greeted the eye on either side! What a garden-like air of universal cultivation! What beautiful, smooth slopes! What green, quiet meadows! What rich round trees brooding over their silent shadows! What ex-

* Of Rail-Road travelling the reality is quite different from the idea that descriptions of it had left upon my mind. Unpoetical as this sort of transit may seem to some minds, I confess I find it excite and satisfy the imagination. The wondrous speed—the quick change of scene—the perfect comfort—the life-like character of the power in motion, the invisible, and mysterious, and mighty steam-horse, urged, and guided, and checked by the hand of science—the cautionary, long, shrill whistle—the beautiful grey vapor, the breath of the great animal, floating over the fields by which we pass, sometimes hanging stationary for a moment in the air, and then melting away like a vision—furnish sufficiently congenial amusement for a poetical minded observer.

quisite dark nooks and romantic lanes! What an aspect of unpretending happiness in the clean cottages, with their little trim gardens! What an air of tranquil grandeur and rural luxury in the noble mansions and glorious parks of the British aristocracy! How the love of nature thrilled my blood with a gentle and delicious agitation, and how proud I felt of my dear native land! It is, indeed, a fine thing to be an Englishman. Whether at home or abroad, he is made conscious of the claims of his country to respect and admiration. As I fed my eye on the loveliness of Nature, or turned to the miracles of Art and Science on every hand, I had always in my mind a secret reference to the effect which a visit to England must produce upon an intelligent and observant foreigner.*

* In the following tribute to the loveliness of my Native land, (see the "Essay on Children,") I referred to my visit to England in the year 1824. Upwards of twenty years ago!) The consciousness of my being equally open to similar impressions in a more advanced period of life, makes me rejoice to think what exquisite feelings and associations may survive the wreck of many hopes, when even youth and health are gone:—"When I revisited my dear native country, after an absence of many weary years, and after a long dull voyage, my heart was filled with unutterable delight and admiration. The land seemed a perfect paradise. It was in the spring of the year. The blue vault of heaven, over which were scattered a few silver clouds—the clear atmosphere—the balmy vernal breeze—the quiet and picturesque cattle browsing on luxuriant verdure, or standing knee-deep in a crystal lake—the blue hills sprinkled with snow-white sheep, and sometime partially shaded with wandering clouds—the meadows glowing with golden buttercups and bedropped with daisies—the trim hedges of crisp and sparkling holly—the sound of near but unseen rivulets—and the songs of foliage-hidden birds—the white cottages almost buried amidst trees, like happy human nests—the ivy-covered church, with its old grey spire, 'pointing up to heaven,' and its gilded vane gleaming in the light—the sturdy peasants with their instruments of healthy toil—the white-capped matrons bleaching their newly-washed garments in the sun, and throwing them like snow-patches on green slopes or glossy garden shrubs—the sun-browned village girls, resting idly on their round elbows at small open casements, their faces in sweet keeping with the trellised flowers—the rosy children loitering about the cottage gates or tumbling gaily on the warm grass;—all formed a combination of enchantments that would mock the happiest imitative efforts of human art."

In travelling through the agricultural districts of England I wondered where the pauperism and misery were hidden, of which every one has heard so much. I saw nothing of them until I entered the large manufacturing towns, or their immediate neighbourhood.

When I looked at the smiling cottages in the country, I thought I could live delightedly on the smallest income, in a sort of Arcadian retirement, but when I got into the restless and mighty heart of the over-grown metropolis of England—of the world—and witnessed the signs of eager toil and feverish rivalry, and observed the desperate struggles of so many thousands of intelligent human beings to support a bare animal existence, I felt my own feebleness and insignificance, and acknowledged the necessity of returning to a field less fiercely contested. Though overwhelmed with a sense of the greatness and grandeur of this unrivalled city—though, as an Englishman, I am proud of its mighty and eternal structures, and the genius, and science, and bravery, and virtue that are found within its countless walls—though I am sensible of its endless variety of attractions for both the frivolous and the thoughtful—I confess it is not the part of the world in which I should be best pleased to take up my abode for life, even supposing that I possessed the golden key which opens the door to so many enjoyments in a great city.

May 20th.—At 3 P. M. started once more from the Southampton docks on my return to the burning plains of India. I embarked on the *Great Liverpool.* The Pilot left us in the evening off the Needles. What a strange climate is this! When we sat down to dinner at 4 P. M. there was a hot sun above us. When we left the table there was a heavy fall of hail, with a clouded sky and a bleak north-east wind. In the merry month of May, too!

21*st.*—Beautiful day—bright and balmy.

22*d.*—Ditto—ditto.

23*d.*—Sighted the Spanish coast early this morning. A fine bold mountainous country—pleasant to contemplate under any

circumstances, but especially from the deck of a vessel at sea, when the eye is tired of mere sky and water.

The passengers have not yet become sociable. They know not each others' names and professions, nor indeed is our worthy Captain himself yet acquainted with more than four or five of us. However, two or three of the bolder faced of our party talk pretty freely at meals, to a circle of silent listeners and close observers. A military Captain to-day ventured on an old joke, and enquired if our Naval host knew how it was that a Captain of a ship at sea could have fresh eggs whenever he wished. Our good host was nonplussed and repeated the question. "Because," replied the Military Joe Miller, "he can always *lay to (two).*"

How monotonous is life at sea! We have a fine clear deck, but we soon grow tired of the same measured walk; and, however brief the voyage may be, it always seems too long, unless there is love-making or coquetting between the sexes, or men of thought and observation and congenial minds are happily brought together. The officers of this ship, like those of most other ships, lead a strange, dull life. They seem only to kill time—to waste existence. Even the passengers themselves, however studious or contemplative on land, are generally idle and restless at sea. Every one seems to feel unsettled on ship-board, even those who spend their life-time on the waves. A sailor appears to me in the condition of a being who is out of the natural sphere of social existence. A man who has been shut up in a jail on land for thirty years, seems hardly to have suffered a greater loss of life than the sailor in his floating prison. A mere passenger on ship-board is almost always impatient of what he feels to be lost time. A sea voyage is but a parenthesis in human life—a sort of *aside*—a period not to be counted in the general sum total of days, and months, and years; and even sailors themselves are always looking towards the end of each voyage, though it is only the beginning of another.

Sighted Cape Finisterre at noon.

Saturday, May 24.—Sighted all day the coast of Portugal.

One of the officers of the ship pointed out to me a castle which he called the Alhambra, not knowing that the Alhambra is in Andalusia. It is astonishing that men passing the same striking objects several times in a year, and knowing how interesting correct information about them would be to those who were likely enough to seek it from them, should be satisfied to continue in a state of the profoundest ignorance. But a sea life seems to prostrate almost every man's mind, and to suppress every sort of activity but that of the body. I had books in my possession, which I should have read with avidity and delight on land, but I could not fix my attention upon them at sea, even for a single hour, although I had really nothing else to do. The coast we are now passing is varied with beautifully shaped hill and dale, and is dotted here and there with small villages; but there is scarcely a single tree. Passed the *Oriental* steamer at some little distance. She is certainly a splendid vessel.

Sunday, May 25.—Still running alone the Portuguese coast—expect to be at Gibraltar to-morrow morning. Divine Service on board.

Monday, May 26.—Anchored off Gibraltar ½ past 7 A. M. The entrance to the strait is highly interesting. Tariffo on the one hand and Tangiers on the other are distinctly visible. Both the Spanish and the African coast are bold and hilly, but somewhat barren. An eminence was pointed out to me called the Queen of Spain's Throne, the hill on which it is said she sat in deep anxiety during the siege of Gibraltar, until she saw the Spanish flag hoisted on the rock. Many vessels from different parts of the world are now lying in the bay. Here is still visible the wreck of the unfortunate steamer *Missouri*, that was burnt to the water's edge. Workmen are busily engaged in separating and preserving the timbers which the waves protected from the flames. The rock of Gibraltar, on approaching it from the North-east, has the appearance of an island. It is about 1480 feet high. The bay is beautifully enclosed with the hills of Spain, Africa, and Gibraltar. Opposite the town of Gibraltar is the Spanish town of Albiseras, famous for its robbers. In Gibraltar we observed

an odd mixture of nations—Turks, Greeks, Arabs, Jews, Englishmen, Americans, and Spaniards. British subjects born at Gibraltar are not very complimentarily nicknamed *Rock Scorpions.*

We visited the celebrated *San Michael's Cave,* in the vast hollow rock. We entered at a low narrow opening in the side of the rock mountain, and passing some fifteen or twenty yards down a gradual but slippery descent, found ourselves in a vast subterranean cathedral, scooped out and carved and adorned by the hand of Nature, but so closely resembling the work of Art as almost to raise a doubt whether Nature could have been the sole architect. The broad and lofty stalactic columns, in many instances fluted with marvellous regularity and precision, and the grand though irregular gothic arches, assume, in the imperfect light of the flambeau, the finest possible aspect of a dim religious temple of immeasurable extent.[*] It is impossible with a few torches to pierce the gloom of the dark passages that surround you at every step you take. Some of the pillars hang only half way down from the roof, which gives the solid and weighty fragments the appearance of miraculously resting on mid air. Other columns rise six or eight feet only from the ground, and in the darkness visible startle one occasionally as with the presence of mysterious living figures, silent and motionless. The moving lights and shadows amidst the vast, stationary, and eternal shapes around, have a mystical effect, at once sublime and awful. The sloping stone floor, slippery from perpetual drippings of water from the roof, craves wary walking, as you have not merely to dread a simple bruise upon the stone if you fall, but must run the chance of sliding down into some black, deep, stifling cavern. So many persons have lost their lives in exploring this dark subterranean temple, that an order has been issued forbidding any person to enter it without experienced guides, and the rude door at the entrance is now usually secured with lock and key.

Gibraltar is esteemed a healthy place of residence. The women seen in the streets wear no bonnets, but throw a shawl or

handkerchief over the head and a scarlet cloak with a black edging over the shoulders.

I was startled a little to find the streets of Gibraltar placarded with the Bills of Sheridan Knowles, who announced a series of Dramatic Lectures. I suppose he will go next to Malta. It was painful to see a man of his talents and reputation endeavouring to support himself as an itinerant lecturer in a place where his merits are so little likely to be appreciated. But England has too often incurred the disgrace of leaving her men of intellect in a state of destitution.

This place is cheap enough. I saw all the Lions of Gibraltar at a cost of about six shillings.

Tuesday, May 27.—Left Gibraltar. Still caught a glimpse of the Spanish coast in the morning. Cape de Gata was the last point that we saw of the Andalusian Coast.

Coasted Algeria (within ten miles of it,) all the afternoon. Saw lights on shore at night. The French have military posts all along this coast. When I was at Gibraltar, I plucked a few geraniums, which grow wildly and in great abundance there, and after I had taken as many as I wanted I observed, for the first time, that the diamond had dropped out of my ring. I searched for it amongst the geraniums for nearly a quarter of an hour, and then gave it up for lost, but to my great surprize the Doctor of the ship brought it to me to-day, and told me that a little boy, sweeping the deck, had found it in a heap of dust and rubbish. As a set-off against this gratification, another boy pulling out the drawer of the cage too quickly, snapped the bone of the leg of one of my English skylarks, which I was taking out to India with much care and trouble. I was advised to kill the bird, but the Doctor at my request splintered the leg, and, for a few days, it promised well, but at last it was evident that the leg had withered. The bird however, quite recovered its health, and sang as frequently and as cheerfully as ever.

Wednesday, May 28.—I rose early (about 5 A. M.) and had a beautiful view of the bold and varied coast of Algeria. We occasionally saw small villages and French posts. At nine

o'clock in the forenoon we approached the city of Algiers. The country in the neighbourhood is richly fertile and picturesque. The distant hills are covered with snow. The fine green land on the sea coast, for some miles on either side of Algiers, is sprinkled with white villas, the residences of the French gentry. These buildings have something of an Oriental aspect, but yet it is rather singular that scarcely any of them can boast of a verandah, and none of them are very tastefully built or ornamented. The windows are remarkably small.

The town or city of Algiers with its white houses runs abruptly up the side of a steep hill. At a distance, out at sea, it is like a huge chalk quarry in the side of the mountain. The houses are all of stone, are very closely packed together, and look as if they were cut out of the solid rock.

No open street is visible from the sea. It would seem as if the builders had left no room for one.* On the whole, Algiers is perhaps the most remarkable looking city in the world. It was taken by the French, I think, in 1830 under Marshall Borgeaud. It was battered by Lord Exmouth in 1816.

The little barbaric fishing boats with their white latteen sails, fly about in all directions over the blue waves as thick as butterflies in a garden, and as they shine brightly in the sun, make the whole scene peculiarly alive and cheerful. Our Captain (McLeod) very kindly kept the vessel pretty close to the shore to gratify us with a good view of it, and, the day being clear and bright, the scene was extremely delightful.* An Englishman cannot help envying the French nation the possession of this rich country and delicious climate. It is *their* India, and a far more agreeable one than ours, on account of its superior healthfulness and its proximity to their home.

Thursday, May 29.—The Captain continues to make a coasting voyage. I told him that Soy of the *Oriental* went straight through the middle of the Mediterranean. He replied that he

* Since this was written, the *Liverpool* has been wrecked, and poor MacLeod has put an end to his existence.

preferred the coasting voyage, not only because it was more interesting to his passengers, but because he could see his way to a mile, and was sheltered by the land; besides no time worth speaking of was lost, and he made the voyage a pleasure trip to his passengers, by presenting them with a succession of land views.

This afternoon we passed the boundary that separates Tunis from Algeria. It was just before we came abreast of the island of Galita, of which we had a view at a distance of 12 or 14 miles. The country now in sight is sandy and barren, but bold and hilly. It is far less interesting than that of Algeria. The bare sand is sometimes seen to extend to the very summits of the hills. We passed close to the well-known rocks called the *Two Brothers*.

MALTA, *Friday, May* 30.—Arrived here at about 6 P. M. after coasting the sister island of Gozo, a miserable mound of stone, covered here and there with an inch or two of soil carefully protected by walls or terraces, without which the rains would wash it into the sea. The peasants' huts are built of loose white stones heaped one upon the other. Not a tree is to be seen in any direction—nothing but a few black shrubs used for firewood. The place is a thinly inhabited desert, dreary beyond expression. This island is only separated from Malta by a narrow channel. Malta itself has just the same melancholy, sun-burnt, bare, desert character, unspeakably cheerless and wretched, until you arrive off the town, which is very striking, and the harbours are quite magnificent. The town is singularly clean, and very substantial, in keeping with the neat and strong fortifications by which it is protected. The stranger when he is about to leave the vessel for the shore should have all his wits about him. The Maltese boatmen, powerful and active fellows, in their strong well-built boats crowd about the vessel and contest for passengers as in an affair of life and death. Their fierce struggle makes it a perilous and troublesome matter to get into one of their boats, for in their intense eagerness to obtain the prize, they jostle one another, clash their boats toge-

ther, and treat the passenger so roughly, some pulling him one way and some another, that he almost fancies himself at the mercy of so many savage beasts of prey, who look as if they would tear him limb from limb. This struggle being carried on amongst a crowd of boats, the passenger has a good chance of losing his footing and falling into the sea. The look of bitter disappointment and despair which the unsuccessful boatmen wear after the strife is over is quite pathetic. Money must be gained with difficulty indeed, where a few coppers are so fiercely fought for, and where the loss is so severely felt.

I went on shore with a small party at seven P. M. We paid *4d.* each for the boat. The boatmen waited and watched for us, without orders, till twelve at night, and unluckily we had hired a boat of another boatman for our return, recommended by an officer on shore. The distress of the disappointed boatmen was extreme. However, we comforted them with a promise to engage them the next morning. All the boats are numbered, and the Police regulations regarding them are very stringent.

We visited the theatre, a not inelegant edifice in the interior, though the outside and the entrance are mean enough. A French conjuror was performing after the fashion of the Wizard of the North, and many of his tricks were very ingenious and surprising. The pit charge is eighteen pence. In the pit, which was densely crowded, there were males only, but in the boxes, which were rather thinly attended, there was a sprinkling of female faces. Some of the women were remarkably handsome in a very noble style of beauty—finely turned heads, clear complexions, delicately pencilled eyebrows, large dark eyes, and, upon the whole, an Italian cast of countenance.

We rambled idly but gaily about the streets, enjoying the novelty of walking on the firm stones and the sense of freedom. We were tired enough of rocking on the waves and treading, day after day, with uncertain feet, the same few narrow planks and sleeping in wooden boxes. The streets were almost pitch dark, except that here and there, at long and irregular intervals, a few dim lamps glimered feebly through the gloom. Ragged,

ruffian-faced, broad-shouldered, dark-browed, black-whiskered, suspicious-looking fellows, loitered about in all directions, meeting us at every corner, and demanding alms, in a tone that sounded too like the unpleasant alternative of "your money or your life." A solitary and unarmed stranger would feel uncomfortable in such encounters in the "dead waste and middle of the night." In every street there was a coffee house, and most of these places of refreshment were open, I believe, all night. For a penny you can have a very good cup of coffee, smoking hot.

At an open casement we saw one of the most celebrated courtezans of the island—a splendid specimen of Maltese beauty. Had she possessed the inestimable attractions of modesty and virtue in addition to her physical graces she would have had all male unmarried Malta at her feet. She had the most majestic form of head I ever beheld in a living woman, and the finest eyes in the world. She held an open letter in one hand, and a candle in the other, so that we had a good view of her. Who could help regretting that so fine a specimen of human flesh and blood should be degraded by the basest and most unhappy of all professions? She beckoned to us to enter her house, but our party all returned in a moralizing mood to the steamer. There were riding at anchor within a few yards of us, a 32-gun frigate, the *Inconstant*, a vessel of extreme beauty, and a line of battle two-decker, the *Formidable*.

May 31.—Immediately after breakfast Capt. E., Dr. M., and myself went on shore, to see all the Lions, and make the most of our time. We were delighted with the view of the city by daylight. Nothing can be more picturesque and cheerful than the streets of Malta. They are something between Venetian and Oriental in their general aspect. The houses are all built of a kind of chalky stone, the produce of Malta, and which is never discolored by the weather. It is accordingly the cleanest and most substantial of cities. I saw no huts. All the houses were of a decent size and appearance. The streets are tolerably wide, and the houses generally of a good height, with a profusion of architectural ornament. The windows of the upper floors usually project and

form a sort of balcony. The streets are seldom on a dead level, but generally run up or down short but steep slopes. The perspectives of almost all the streets present exquisite studies for the artist, and if Prout were here he would be in raptures. Sometimes a long richly ornamented street ends in a patch of intensely blue sky, or a glimpse of the purple Mediterranean, or a hazy distant hill, and the clear cerulean sky above all. The countless varieties of costume add greatly to the picturesqueness of the scene. Scotch warriors, with huge horse-hair caps and bare legs, mingle harmoniously with the more gracefully garmented Greeks, and grave Turks in their long flowing trowsers and white vests and red felt caps or tarbooshes, and (swarming like ravens about their prey,) the Maltese priests, with their broad black hats and dark garments casting their ominous shadows on the white walls. The place is overrun with these latter sable gentry. Their dark figures startle one at every turning of this otherwise cheerful city. It is one comfort that the city walls are white, and the sky is clear and blue above them, so that, let superstition do its worst, it cannot wholly suppress in the minds of the people those lively impulses which are cherished by the sight of pleasant objects in nature or in art. The Roman Catholic Churches are all elaborately ornamented, presenting a striking contrast to the new Protestant Church, built chiefly at the expense of Adelaide, the Queen Dowager. This church is, indeed, simple and unadorned, but well suited to the religion of which it is the temple. It is large and commodious, and in excellent taste, with the exception of the windows, which are small and private-house-looking, if I may so express myself.

We visited Civita Vecchia. This city at noon is like a city of the dead. Its inhabitants are all asleep, and all the houses closed. But at Valetta the people care less for their siesta; even in the middle of the day there is a crowd and bustle in the streets. The catacombs of Civita Vecchia are merely long subterraneous passages cut out of the solid rock, not wide enough to admit two persons abreast, and not always high enough for a tall man to avoid stooping. They extend for several miles, and

a stranger may easily lose his way where different passages meet. They are so dark at mid-day, that it is necessary, in threading such disagreeable underground lanes, to be well supplied with torches. Here and there a cave is cut in the side of the passage for the graves of the dead. Sometimes you see a sort of family vault, with the berths distinctly cut for the father, the mother, and the children. Near the catacombs is a well built church, the walls of which are profusely covered with the wretched daubs of some Maltese artists. This church has a fine dome, and is cheerfully lighted. It has also a handsome marble pavement. But its monuments are in the worst taste. The vulgar fancy of representing Death as a hideous skeleton is illustrated on every tombstone in rude mosaic work, and the pictorial representations of Jesus Christ on the cross, are shocking images of prostration of spirit and agony and despair. They make one's blood run cold to look at them, and are very far from being calculated to elevate the mind with a sense of the sublime patience of a suffering God.

We visited the Governor's country palace and garden. The former reminds one of a Calcutta mansion. It was quite open to the public, and we were shown into the most private rooms, if any of them could be said to bear that character. The furniture was simple in the extreme and not very abundant. The Governor (Sir Patrick Stewart) visits the house generally of an evening, and sometimes spends the hot season there. The garden is much better worth looking at than the house, and it does great credit to the care and skill bestowed upon it. The soil (brought, I suppose, from Sicily,) is deeper than I saw it on any other part of the island. The loquat was flourishing in this garden, and I saw some fine cherries. There were also some pomegranate trees in blossom. The elegant ginger tree with its delicate leaves, I saw here, for the first time, I think, in my life. The banana does not flourish in this climate; the fruit is extremely small. Oranges, grapes, and figs are abundant. In a little tank at the bottom of the garden I recognized the Indian lotus. This garden is quite an oasis in the desert. The surround-

ing country is hideously barren, and at noon the intense glare of the white roads is exceedingly distressing. A more miserable island, as far as its natural qualities are concerned, was never inhabited by man. A few fields of sickly wheat and barley are, here and there, cultivated with great care and trouble, the inch and a half of vegetable soil being scarcely distinguishable amongst the stones with which it is mixed. The plan adopted here of preserving the precious grains of soil—the thin coating of dust—by walls of piled stone is in the Chinese style. It cuts up a country with sharp lines that quite destroy any natural beauty it may happen to possess. However, it is of little consequence what the people do with the face of nature in Malta. They cannot make it worse. The country looks as if it had been taken eternal possession of by plague, pestilence, and famine.

To give a stranger an agreeable impression of Malta he ought not to be led beyond its beautiful harbours and fortifications, and the clean and picturesque streets of Valetta. The only dirty things visible in the town are the beggars, and these are impudent and innumerable. Their importunities are quite distracting; nothing but a threat or a blow can relieve you from their attendance. From hoary rogues of eighty to little cunning rascals of a twelve-month old, they are all equally troublesome, persevering, and impertinent.

Our curiosity led us to the church of St. John, where we saw the tombs of the Grand Masters and Knights. This church is decorated in a vulgar style, but still, from its size and general appearance, it is rather impressive. The monuments are in several instances very striking, but rarely tasteful.

Most of the paintings, of which the Maltese are very proud, are abominable daubs, but there are two or three fine Carravaggio's amongst them. We saw several young women in the confessionals—some of them very pretty. The sight of these young females whispering their most secret throughts and misdeeds into the ears of men, perhaps less pure and more frail than themselves, was extremely painful, and suggested a variety of images and reflections, by no means complimentary to a sys-

tem of religion which trusts so much to man's imperfect nature, and encroaches on the jurisdiction of his God.

We next visited the Governor's house at Valetta. We met him just leaving his door for his evening ride, and having exchanged bows, we took possession of the rooms he and the ladies of his family had just quitted. His house is indeed an open one. Mere birds of passage and perfect strangers as we were, the servants introduced us, without order or ticket of any kind, into every apartment in the house. Our names even were not demanded. The Governor's private study, with open letters carelessly scattered upon the table, was as free to us as the outer verandah. It struck us as very odd, that the Governor should thus consent to be deprived of all the comforts of domestic privacy, and allow his sitting room, dining-room, bed-room and bathing-room, to be criticized by strangers of all ranks, characters, and conditions. One of the largest of the apartments was hung with rich and curious drapery, but there was no attempt at magnificence in the furniture. A small table was just laid out for the Governor and his family in a very simple style.

While we lay in harbour at Malta, we were surrounded with boats, some waiting for hire, others bringing for sale ornaments neatly cut in Malta stone, straw hats, canaries, fruit, &c. &c. In some of the boats were several expert divers, eager to exhibit their skill and courage for a very trifling remuneration. A little Maltese boy, about eight years of age, with clean compact limbs and a quick intelligent countenance, particularly attracted our attention. He dived from one side of the steamer, passed under the bottom and rose up on the other side as a sort of gratuitous exhibition of his powers. If any passenger desired him to repeat the process, he pressed his hands together, held them downwards, looked steadily at the water, and exclaiming, "I go," took his fish-like trip without a moment's hesitation. Small coins, such as silver three-penny pieces, were thrown into the sea. The boy looked fixedly in the direction in which they sank, and after they had gone down several yards he plunged into the water and brought them up again. He never missed

his aim. Once he mounted on the shoulder of a man, and thus connected, the boy and the man dived into the sea together and brought up a silver fourpenny piece thrown in by a passenger. Perhaps these feats may not seem particularly wonderful to others, but to me they were certainly novel and surprizing.

June 2d.—Fair wind and fine weather.

June 3d.—Lovely day: fair wind still. Thermometer 70, Expect to reach Alexandria to-morrow about 3 o'clock in the afternoon.

June 4th.—Beautiful day again, but the wind is right a-head, which will make our arrival at Alexandria much later than we expected.

June 5th.—We arrived at Alexandria in the evening. Before sunset we had an interesting view of the land. It is particularly low. In approaching it you seem to be almost conscious of a descent. It looks as if it were lower than the water. The first object distinguishable was not Pompey's Pillar, as I had expected, but the new Light House. Pompey's Pillar being rather of a dingy hue was not strongly relieved against the hazy sky, but lighter colored buildings gleamed out brightly in the sun. At last as we approached a little nearer to the land, to the right of the Light House, the most celebrated pillar in the world became dimly discernible to the strained eye. The sea coast of Egypt is barren and desolate. There was a yellow haze on the low sandy shore that looked hot as the infernal regions, and seemed a congenial atmosphere for plague and fever. When we got into the harbour the appearance of the stony city—the large public buildings—the Pasha's Turkish fleet—the varied costumes of the people (Franks, Turks, and Egyptians) presented a lively and interesting scene.

The boats from the shore crowd thickly round the steamer, and the boatmen look out as anxiously for a fare as if their lives depended upon their luck. Whenever a passenger appears at the side ladder of the steamer there is a deadly struggle for his custom. One boatman siezes his person, another his carpet bag, another his stick or umbrella. These several properties are re-

tained as pledges of or securities for the favor of the traveller, who, if he wishes to avoid disappointing such zealous friends, must divide himself into several pieces and give a share to each. The passenger at last usually loses his temper, asserts his independence of election, and lays his hand pretty heavily on the skull or back of the most importunate of his troublers. With a free application of blows and threats, he eventually succeeds in selecting a boat, and in recovering the goods unlawfully withheld, and most reluctantly returned.

In going from the steamer to the shore I observed the extraordinary resplendence of that phosphoric light which gives such beauty to the sea at night in hot climates. The oars of the rowers seemed to raise up and scatter rich heaps of liquid metal.

We did not reach the shore before 7 o'clock. The fierceness and strife and bluster of the Arab boatmen about our steamer were at least equalled by the porters and donkey-boys on the land. At last I got quietly seated on an Egyptian donkey, and made the best of my way to the Hotel de l'Europe, a part of which building is appropriated to the office of the Peninsular and Oriental Company's Agent at Alexandria. We here exhibited our passage tickets and received additional documents. We were told that we should start next morning at 6 o'clock on our way to the Nile and the desert. We had a hot supper and went early to bed, because we had early to rise; but the howling of dogs, the braying of donkeys, the quarrels of men, women, and children, combined with the excitement of novelty and the assaults of musquitoes, allowed me no opportunity to avail myself of

Tired Nature's sweet restorer, balmy sleep.

Friday, June 6th.—At 5 o'clock A. M., I trotted off on my little donkey to get a sight of Cleopatra's Needles. The distance was not more than 8 or 10 minutes' ride from the Hotel, and yet I was the only passenger who had the curiosity to visit these interesting remains of antiquity. The one that still stands erect is a good deal worn by the wind on one side where

the hieroglyphics are almost wholly obliterated, and the surface of the hard granite is as smooth as if it had been partially washed away by the perpetual dashing of the seas. The Needle now standing is one solid block of stone. Luckily it seems to have been less noticed by our own countrymen and other travellers than Pompey's Pillar. Not a single name is inscribed on it in white paint or black, and its general beauty is in no degree injured, except by the hand of time or the attacks of the elements. The broken prostrate Needle is half covered with sand. Its upper side forms a broad path from one hillock to another. An old Egyptian woman was sweeping it with a broom of reeds. She was just like a Bengal metranney. These interesting relics of the past are in a kind of enclosed square, the four sides being formed of the miserable mud huts of the Pasha's fleet. The people defile the immediate neighbourhood of the columns in a manner unspeakably offensive, but which has perhaps preserved them from the injury which they might have suffered from parties of travellers if they had been tempted to linger idly about the place. The Pasha is after all a mere savage still, or he would take a little more care of the ruins of ancient art which impart so peculiar an interest to the Land of Egypt in the eyes of foreigners.

The poorer classes of the Egyptian women generally wear only a single petticoat of very coarse blue linen, resembling, in its loose and shapeless character, the bathing dress of the women in England. The Egyptian petticoat is open at the breast and hangs so loosely about the person that a modest woman must be careful of her attitudes, if she would avoid exposing her whole person. Few European strangers, however, would desire to see more of them than the face, for the poorer women of Egypt, who are always much exposed to the climate, are like the same class of females in other hot climates, extremely ugly. Some of the women here wear a sort of coarse, black veil stretching across the face just under the eyes, and hanging down in a long peak, like a black beard or the trunk of an elephant. Those who can afford a little ornament have a golden clasp to support the veil in connection with the head-dress. When that is deemed too

expensive, a little cloth or tape band answers the purpose, and extends down the nose, leaving the eyes uncovered. The Egyptians have always been fond of ornament in dress, and the wives of even very poor people who can hardly support existence, are sometimes ornamented with the gold link or clasp to which I have alluded. I saw a fat lady, apparently a personage of some consequence, ride across the great square on a donkey. What a hideous bundle of black clothes! She squatted astride on the animal. Buried in her funereal-looking out-of-doors dress, her eyes alone were visible.

Board and lodging at the Hotels at Alexandria are charged at 10 shillings a day—exclusive of wine and spirits. A bottle of champaigne is 8 shillings—a bottle of beer 2 shillings—of soda water 1 shilling. For the boat that took me from the steamer I paid the usual charge of 1 shilling.

At 6 o'clock omnibusses were at the door of the Hotel to take us to the Mahmoudee Canal, a few minutes drive.

We passed Pompey's Pillar in our way. The donkey boys call it *Bomby's Billar*. The immortal name of *William Button* is inscribed upon it in gigantic black letters. Our luggage, without any care or trouble on our part, had been already placed on the roof of the Canal boat. This boat I found more comfortable than I expected to find it, which was owing to its not being so crowded with passengers as it usually is. We could move about in it; but still the heat was dreadful, and the table ill-supplied. Every thing was ill-dressed and dirty, and the provisions huddled together in all corners, and with an utter disregard of all decent and necessary distinctions. Soft tarts and puddings were crushed by the weight of substantial joints accidentally bespread with fruits and custards, and the most incongruous and hateful mixtures of gravies and sauces and uncongenial liquids of all kinds. Our boat was tugged along for some distance by a little steamer (not the Liliputian vessel with the Archimedean screw) but the canal soon became so shallow that we were obliged to dispense with her services, and content ourselves with the assistance of eight Arab horses on the bank. Every now and then

our progress was impeded a good deal by vessels in our way, though our Arab Captain always breathed forth a premonitory announcement of his approach through a long tin trumpet. We had breakfasted hurriedly on shore, but took a second breakfast on the boat, for which there was no charge. Wines, which were taken pretty freely in the course of the day, were put down in the bill. A bottle of claret cost seven shillings—a bottle of soda water two shillings. A gentleman who had perhaps taken a drop too much fell over-board, and would surely have been drowned, had he not been caught by the clothes by a fellow passenger as he floated under the side window.

Arrived at Atfee at a little after 8, P. M. The passengers and the baggage were at once transferred to a steamer called the *Nile* on the other side of the lock. The river Nile has not been so low, they say, for six years past, as it is now. The *Nile* steamer is comfortable enough, though very small, and her engines, though on a miniature scale, are extremely beautiful.

June 6th.—Arrived at Cairo at about 6 o'clock, A. M. The heat is intense. An old Arab assured me that the hot weather usually checks the plague. There had been no case of plague at Alexandria or Cairo for six months past. The Pasha has lately widened some of the streets of these cities, and has done his best to make his dirty countrymen keep them clean. I have described Cairo in my published Overland Guide, so I shall say nothing more about this city here.

June 7th.—The *Precursor* having arrived at Suez, and intelligence of her arrival having been communicated by telegraph, we were obliged to hurry on. We started this day from Cairo at ½ past 9, A. M. My three larks were carefully lashed on the roof of one of the vans, which I had chosen for myself, and five other passengers. Two or three of the vans only are on C springs. The one I secured was the best, and was driven by Mr. Hill, the English head coachman. The vans are much improved. Mr. Thornton, landlord of the Hotel at Cairo, told me that he was afraid to recommend the C spring vans, for the spring of these sometimes gave way, but we took our chance, and met with no

accident. Our van was very easy, and we had no serious jolting. The heat was intolerable between 12 and 4 o'clock of the day, but it was cool enough at night. My birds, in spite of the motion of the vehicle, and the heat of the sun, sang the whole way until nightfal. It was pleasant to hear English larks from rich clover fields singing in the bare desert.

We took tiffin at Station house No. 4, and dined at No. 6, which we reached at 9 o'clock. We slept at No. 6, and started next day at 4 in the morning.

June 8th.—Arrived at Suez. What a poor, filthy inn! However, they are now building a large pucka one at this place for the accommodation of Overland Travellers. One of the ladies going to wash her hands discovered a putrid mouse in her water jug. The animal must have been a week dead. Our breakfast was abominable, with the exception of a tolerably fat goose. Every thing else was as bad as it could be. The water was undrinkably brackish.

Left Suez at 8, A. M.

Monday, June 9th.—Saw Mounts Horeb and Sinai from the Red Sea from the deck of our good steamer *Precursor.*

June 10th.—Strong northerly breeze.

June 11th.—Northerly breeze continues.

June 12th.—Northerly breeze continnes. Thermometer at 86.

June 13th.—Northerly breeze continues.

June 14th.—This morning at ½ past nine we anchored off the magnificent heights of Aden. I call the heights magnificent, and they are so, on account of their noble outlines, but there is scarcely a blade of grass upon them. There is a sort of desert shrub, almost a thistle, thinly scattered over the sandy plain on which the inn stands. The general appearance of the plain is dreary and volcanic. The mountains are a mighty heap of cinders. The bay is noble in its breadth, but the water is shallow. We tried when on land to sleep at night out of doors, but the wind was too hot, and towards morning it came in fierce gusts, that seemed to threaten the destruction of the inn, and cut our faces with small cinders and sand and broken shells.

Our young men as usual indulged themselves in foolish jollifications, and recklessly threw away their cash, as if the gold mohur tree were no fable. The hotel is kept by a Parsee. Some of the servants are from Bengal and others from Bombay. The cantonments are six or seven miles from the inn, but good donkies are easily procured.

As we sat out in the open air at a late hour at the back of the inn, I could not help thinking how much Byron or Scott might have made of the scene before us. Within twenty yards were the bases of lofty hills, which shut us in on all sides, except toward the sea, which the inn faces. Sometimes the outlines of the mountains were almost lost in mist—at other times the moon shone out clearly and made them beautifully distinct. When the gloom enveloped the vast forms of the mountains, the lights in the little thatched out-houses belonging to the inn, with the dark figures of Asiatics in their white garments, had a singularly wild and picturesque effect. But a few weeks ago we were in the busy streets of London, shivering with cold—and now we were panting with heat, and surrounded by Asiatics.

The water here is brackish—scarcely drinkable. Grapes were the only fruit procured for us. I could not obtain the luxury of a green leaf for my birds. What a place to live in!

June 16th.—Left Aden at 8, A. M.

June 25th.—Arrived at ½ past 2, P. M. in the pretty harbour of Point de Galle. The shore on the right is fringed with cocoa-nut trees. The fortifications are on the left. The harbour is open to the south. There are dangerous sunken rocks in several directions. In some places they rise up boldly, crowded with cocoa-nut trees, and the spray breaks gloriously over them. I only saw two shops in the town for the sale of European goods. The shopmen were natives of Ceylon. The inns are of an humble character; but they are cleanly. They charge 6d. for a cup of coffee and half a crown for a bed.

Lord Elphinstone is still here superintending his plantations. The general aspect of the town is dull and dreary. Nothing is going on. The houses of the gentry are cheerless and ill-furnished.

They are in narrow streets, and very ill-protected from the curious eye of the street passengers. They have thatched roofs, unglazed venetian windows, canvas screens before their open front doors, or coarse bamboo cheeks. The flooring of the best houses is of red tile with white divisions. There is nothing in the bazaar but different kinds of rice and other grain. Two Cingalese boys spoke to me in the bazaar. They were collegians learning the English language. They said they were Christians. When they heard that I had arrived in the steamer, they entreated me to give them a letter to the Captain requesting him to permit them to see the steamer. I promised if they would come to see the vessel at 6 o'clock next morning, I would introduce them to the Captain; but they never came.

June 26th.—Left the harbour of Point de Galle at ½ past 7 P. M.

June 28th.—Arrived at Madras. The frigate *Fox* in the roads. We lowered our flag in passing close under her stern, and she sent her band aft and greeted us with a tune—

"*Welcome Home.*"

June 29th.—Left Madras roads at ½ past 10, A. M.

July 2d.—Took the Pilot on board at the Sandheads at about 7, A. M.

Had we been up to him an hour earlier we should have had sufficient water at Kedgeree to run right up to Calcutta in one day. But want of water compelled us to anchor below Kedgeree. We expect to be off Garden Reach to-morrow at noon.

Several of our passengers—the Captain and some of the Stewards and sailors were ill last night with stomach-ache and vomiting. The sickness appears to have been caused by some sudden change in the atmosphere. The barometer was very low—the night air damp and the dew heavy.

Reached Saugor Island at 10, A. M.

Anchored off Cowcolly Light House at 12.

July 3d.—Up anchor at 6, A. M. and arrived at Calcutta at ½ past 11—a glorious run.

The whole passage from Southampton to Calcutta has been effected within six weeks.

THE ISLAND OF JERSEY:

ITS ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES AS A PLACE OF RESIDENCE FOR OLD INDIANS.

Jersey, small as it is (but twelve miles in length and seven or eight in breath) contains some fifty or sixty thousand inhabitants; and about twenty thousand of those are British settlers, who have no regular employment, and kill their time by wandering in the streets or lounging in the shops, when they happen to have no particular visits to make or to return. In the dearth of public amusements, they have hardly any other resource. Most of the British residents in Jersey have chosen their location from motives of economy, and live on such narrow incomes that they cannot afford to encourage and support those establishments for public entertainment which make an English watering-place so agreeable to idlers. There is not a library or a bookseller's shop in the island at which any of the latest and best publications are procurable: there is no demand for good books. There is a small theatre in St. Helier, but it is rarely open, and it sometimes happens that there are not a dozen persons in the boxes. Literature and the acted Drama are little regarded. Political and miscellaneous intelligence, however, is eagerly sought for, and four English local papers and about as many French ones are pretty well supported. There are two Reading Rooms, where most of the London papers and three or four of the monthly and quarterly periodicals, are taken in regularly; but these Rooms contain no library of reference. There is a small and very old collection of books called the Public Library, in charge of an old Jersey woman, but nineteen out of twenty of the British residents are utterly ignorant of its existence, and, perhaps, not more than once, in two or three months, upon the average, is the dust of this secret and sacred Institution disturbed by the hand of a visitor. The library was left a legacy to the Public by a

patriotic and intelligent Jerseyman—one of the Historians of his native island. The books are far from numerous, but some of them are very rare and valuable, Any person, Jerseyman or foreigner, may make daily visits to this library for the small subscription or donation of five shillings per annum, but no book is, on any account, to be removed from it. The old house in which the library is kept is in the heart of the chief town, and yet it is as little known and as little visited as if it were hidden in a forest; so that the most shy and sensitive student might here hold intimate communion with the spirits of his favorite authors with as little fear of interruption as if he were in a hermit's cell.

The Natives of Jersey are a brave and loyal people, devotedly attached to England. They literally detest the French nation—which considering their Norman descent and their immediate proximity to the coast of France, is singular enough. They even yet use the old Norman French amongst themselves, and in the Senate, the Pulpit, and their only Court of Law, though they can speak English with fluency and correctness. Most of the Jersey gentry speak our language quite as well as we do ourselves, though the less educated classes have a peculiar intonation, which reminds one of the English of an Irishman. The tradespeople of St. Helier are almost all British people, and the few Jerseymen amongst them address their customers in English. An English visitor, unacquainted with the French language, or unwilling to use it, may pass all over the island without uttering a single word of any other language than his own. It is true that he may now and then fall in with an old peasant who may fail to understand him; but any little boy or girl will act as an interpreter; for the "rising generation," even amongst the poorest classes, all speak English. Almost every Native contrives to give some degree of education to his children. Absolute destitution is extremely rare. A beggar is never seen in the streets. The laws, though deformed by some antique barbarisms, have, upon the whole, a mild and wholesome tendency; and the spirit of the Government is paternal and indulgent. There is a simplicity, a

sturdiness, a bluntness of manner, and independence of feeling in the people that are very congenial to the taste of an Englishman, who has the liberality to recognise and appreciate in others the qualities that have been attributed to his own nation. The lower classes of the Jersey people are superior, in conduct and principle, to the same classes amongst our own countrymen. There is no night Police in town or country. The offences that occupy so fully the Criminal Courts and daily newspapers in England, are rare indeed amongst the people of Jersey. They are less exposed to the sharp stings of necessity and the temptations to evil. The common ploughman in Jersey is, usually, a small proprietor of land himself, or farms it at a fair rent. There are no very large estates. A single field is often divided into half a dozen shares, consisting of narrow slips, each of which is cultivated according to the fancy of the individual proprietor; so that nothing can be more diversified than the aspect of a Jersey valley or hill-side, with its lines of different crops and of different hues.

The farmers live with great moderation and simplicity, in stone-built houses, in the old Norman style of Architecture, with the broad grateless fire-places, and the cooking-pot hung from three sticks, gypsey-fashion, over a pyramid of blazing logs. Their food is chiefly vegetable, and their drink cider or a cup of Adam's ale, from one of the nearest brooks which intersect the fields and roads in all directions.

The island is divided into twelve parishes, with a church in each. To each parish there is a Protestant clergyman and a constable (or magistrate.) The clergyman and the constable have each a seat in the States or local Parliament. The clergy, with the exception of the Dean, who is nominated by the crown, are appointed by the Governor. The Dean of Jersey holds a spiritual court, from which there is an appeal to the see of Winchester. The constables are elected by the parishioners, and serve for a fixed period only. They are unpaid. The States consist of the Lieutenant-Governor of the island (a British Military Officer appointed by the Queen of England,) the Bailli (the chief

civil authority and always a native of the Island,) the twelve jurats or judges of the Royal Court (at which the Bailli presides as Chief Justice,) and the twelve clergymen and twelve constables of the twelve parishes. The local legislature is extremely jealous of any interference on the part of the British Parliament, which they pretend has no authority in the island, though they readily recognize the power of the Queen in Council. They give her Majesty, as a matter of courtesy, the Royal title, but they consider that she holds the Island, not as Queen of England, but as Duchess of Normandy. It was held, till very lately, that an Act of Parliament had not force of law in Jersey, unless the Island were especially mentioned in it, and not even then, until it had been duly registered by the island Authorities, and that it was always in their power to nullify its provisions by withholding the registration. The majority of Jerseymen still maintain this doctrine, but they do so in the face of certain orders from the Queen in Council to register all Acts of Parliament without exception relating to the Island. They also still assert that no Act of Parliament can be valid which affects their ancient and peculiar privileges, as if the will of the present Legislature of Great Britain were not omnipotent over every British possession, or as if with a dusty, worm-eaten, rotten parchment, the gift of a single dead King, they could laugh to scorn the power of every succeeding monarch with all his Lords and Commons at his back. If this were the case, the despotism or folly of one crowned head, in an age of barbarism, might stop the progress of the world, and perpetuate the most monstrous evils and absurdities for the gratification of a momentary whim. That men of sense (and Jerseymen in general, are far from deficient in ordinary acuteness,) should lose sight of the broadest first principles in a bigotted adherence to antiquated forms, is indeed extraordinary, and a Jerseyman is never seen to so much disadvantage as when eagerly contending for the perservation of those laws and customs which were suited well enough to the condition of the small community of his remote and barbarous ancestors, but are, in most cases, utterly inapplicable to the greatly in-

creased and more mixed and more enlightened population of the Island in the present day.

The British Residents, who form so large a portion of the population of Jersey, have at present no share in the making or administration of the laws, nor in the election of public officers, nor are Englishmen permitted to hold office themselves under the local government. The Governor of the island is in a somewhat anomalous position in time of peace. His duty is rather military than civil, and though he takes a seat in the Senate he has little more than the shadow of civil power, with the exception of the authority of his veto, which may suspend a new law of the States pending a reference to the Queen in Council. All Jerseymen are enrolled in the island militia, which, with the depot of a British Regiment, is under the immediate authority of the Governor. As far as the Military protection of the island is concerned, the Governor's power is paramount, but the least attempt on his part to interfere with the civil authorities is regarded with the greatest jealousy and indignation.

The laws and Government of Guernsey, are on all leading points identical with those of Jersey. Each has its States, composed of jurats, clergymen, and constables, and each its Royal Court.

The twelve jurats or judges of the Royal Court, are elected for life from the wealthiest or most respectable classes of the community. They are elected by the people. The election is usually decided by party spirit, and almost always the possession of a certain amount of annual income, is one of the necessary qualifications of a candidate for a seat on the Bench; but a knowledge of the law is not at all essential. The candidates are usually merchants or farmers. They are generally men of fair moral reputation, but they are rarely very accomplished or intellectual. Some of the British Residents have a notion that there is no chance of justice for an Englishman in the Jersey Court, in any case in which he may be opposed by a Native. Be that as it may, there is unquestionably much danger of an improper personal bias in the decisions of the Court, in

cases in which Jerseymen alone are interested, from the fact of the judges mixing familiarly with the members of so small a community, and being connected nearly or remotely with the great majority of them, by family relationship, or friendly or hostile intercourse. Many of the Jurats also continue their trade as merchants or farmers, and may be called upon to pronounce a decision in cases in which their own personal interests are involved. When to these circumstances are added the disadvantage of a very imperfect and non-professional education, and the fact that the office of a Jurat, though so earnestly sought for, is apparently *unpaid*, and therefore exposed to the suspicion that it may have something valuable attached to it, of a nature that ought not to constitute the reward of honest labor—especially the labor of a judge—it might fairly be supposed that the Royal Court would fail to command the respect or confidence of the people. But the system works a good deal better than even the most candid thinkers would imagine, and cases of actual corruption and injustice are comparatively rare. The natives make no complaint themselves, and the majority of the British Residents trouble themselves very little about the laws or politics of the island. It is true that Mr. Carus Wilson, the gigantic reformer, has stirred up a strange commotion and "frighted the isle from its property." Mr. Wilson's case and a great public question, though in their nature quite distinct, have been strangely mixed up together. Mr. Wilson accused a Mr. Le Sueur, who, in conjunction with his avocations as a barrister, holds the office of Constable of St. Helier, of sacrificing the case of a client—a woman of the town, charged with the crime of theft. Mr. Le Sueur commenced a prosecution against him for libel, and it was in the course of this trial that Mr. Wilson interrupted the Court. By the old Norman law, a defendant has the right to recuse or challenge any of his judges of whose freedom from an unfair bias he may entertain a reasonable suspicion. But this recusation must be made before the case is proceeded with. Mr. Wilson denied the competency of the Court, which he said was not in reality a Royal Court, but a mere mockery of a legal institution.

He, however, pleaded before it, by which he virtually acknowledged its authority, and he did not recuse any of his judges until the time had passed for the exercise of such a privilege. Besides, it was pretty well understood that it was his intention to recuse the Bailli and all the jurats without exception, so that the only court of the island would have been fairly cleared! He was condemned to pay a fine of ten pounds, and to make an apology, and on his refusal to do either he was committed to prison. He maintained that his committal was illegal, because it was without the form of a warrant, but the local Law requires no warrant, and Mr. Wilson's mistake was in supposing that he had an important advantage over the Jersey Judges in the discovery of what might constitute a fatal error of form, or a serious technical irregularity in English law, but which had been the invariable practise of the Jersey Court from time out of mind. Apparently determined, however, to see no distinction between Jersey law and British law, when it was his interest to confound them, though he brought them into very odious opposition when it suited his purpose, he appealed to her Majesty's Court of Queen's Bench for a writ of *Habeas Corpus*. This startled and alarmed the Royal Court. Such a thing had never been heard of in Jersey, and it argues something in favor of the general character of the local Judges, that Englishmen had never been driven to make a similar application before. The Jersey people generally, though they pretended to consider the Royal Court entirely independent of the highest Courts of England, betrayed considerable uneasiness on the occasion, as they imagined that the privileges and immunities of the island were now in danger. It was useless to explain to them that the operation of the Habeas Corpus Act would form a security for the liberties of Jerseymen as well as Englishmen, and that, in point of fact, the Natives required such a safe-guard against the injustice of their only and very imperfect Court, even more than the British Residents, who were, for the most part, birds of passage, and if they doubted or dreaded the justice of the Jersey Jurats might return to their own country with little inconvenience. Their

reply was, that the introduction of the Habeas Corpus Act would be the first step towards a general interference with the Island laws and institutions—to which, with all their antique imperfections, they are bigotedly attached. Mr. Wilson obtained his *Habeas*, but as it was found that he had really been guilty of a contempt of Court, and the forms of law had been duly observed in his committal, according to Jersey practice, he was remanded to prison to await the pleasure of his judges. Mr. Wilson still refused either to pay the fine or to apologize. However, he has been since enlarged on bail, pending his trial for libel.

Though, with reference to the Habeas Corpus question, Mr. Wilson's personal case has failed, he has secured the recognition of a principle of the most vital importance to the best interests of the island. Lord Denman has declared, that the writ of Habeas Corpus runs to Jersey, as it runs to Yorkshire, or to any other English county.

The islanders maintain, that the Habeas Corpus Act is valueless to them, because they were already in possession of the privilege of appeal to the Queen in Council; but it appears that this power of appeal is a mere mockery to most of those who would wish to avail themselves of it. Unless a man plead *in formâ pauperis*, which he cannot do except in the case of his being able to declare that he has no property amounting to the sum of *five pounds*, he must go to a most ruinous expense even in the preliminary proceedings. Thus none but a pauper or a Crœsus can venture to have recourse to this boasted right.

The local laws are founded on ancient Norman precedents, and the decisions of later native judges, with occasional reference to the laws of England, which are sometimes adopted with modifications. However, the will of the judges is in a great measure the law of the land. There is a good deal of litigation in the island, and this is encouraged, partly by the uncertainty of the decisions, and partly by the cheapness of the forms of law. Lands may be conveyed from one person to another at the cost of half a-crown. Some of the local regulations, however, render

it a dangerous matter for a stranger to purchase land. The purchaser is held responsible for all the personal debts of every description that the former proprietor may have contracted previous to the sale. On account of the facilities afforded to debtors to escape from the island, the law of arrest is particularly rigid, but landed proprietors are exempted from its operation.

Jersey is so near to France that in clear weather the French coast is distinctly seen from it with the naked eye. Even the houses are visible. On some days, when the atmosphere is particularly transparent, the spire of the celebrated Cathedral of the inland town of Contances may be seen from the hills of Jersey. The island at some period formed, it is supposed, a portion of the mainland of France, and it must be a serious mortification to our neighbours to find a lovely spot of earth, which Nature seems to have intended for the French, in the secure possession of the English. The French have made several attempts to seize the island, but the hardy and gallant natives have always defended it with such obstinate heroism, and the island is, moreover, so strongly guarded both by Art and Nature—by redoubts and batteries and martello towers and inaccessible cliffs and encircling rocks—that the French must have at last discovered that it is idle to dream of wresting it from us by open force.

Fort Regent, which is on the brow of a lofty and rugged hill that over-looks the town of St. Helier and commands the only safe entrance to the island, was built by the British Government at the cost of a million of money. The old harbour being too small for the greatly increased commerce of the port, Mr. Walker, the well-known, engineer is now constructing a large and noble new harbour. The immense outlay for this purpose was voted by the States from the revenues of the Island, which are almost exclusively the produce of the harbour dues. The aggregate amount of these must be very considerable to meet so large a call, and as they are separately so trifling as to fall lightly enough upon individuals, it is clear that the general trade of the island must be in a most flourishing condition. This

prosperity affords a striking illustration of the advantages of free trade. Corn, wine, spirits, tea, sugar, silk—indeed all articles of commerce, and from all parts of the world, are received into the island free of duty! Amongst the chief exports are cows, apples, potatoes, butter and honey, and also cordage, nets, and knit-stockings, the manufacture of the island. The inhabitants carry on a considerable trade with Newfoundland, to which they offer staple commodities in exchange for fish, which they convey to various ports in the Mediterranean, and sometimes to North and South America.

Jersey is not by any means so cheap a place of residence as it used to be, but it still possesses advantages in point of economy combined with some degree of elegance and comfort over every other part of the British dominions. To show this it is necessary to enter a little into detail.

In the first place, then, the English shilling, passes for thirteen pence Jersey, and the Jersey pound is an ounce and a half heavier than the English pound. In calculating the actual cost of articles in Jersey these advantages must never be forgotten. Meat is not nominally much cheaper than it is in the country in England. The butcher in St. Helier will contract to supply families with all kinds of meat at the rate of sixpence half-penny per pound. This in reality is something less than sixpence British money per British pound. In the rural districts in England a similar contract might be made at the rate of sixpence half-penny or sevenpence per pound, but then the purchaser would not be allowed, as he is in Jersey, to select the prime joints. Bread is the same price, nominally, in Jersey as in England, the difference in the currency forming the only advantage in favor of the former. It is in exciseable articles—chiefly wines and groceries—that the cheapness of Jersey is most manifest. Good loaf sugar is to be had for from 4*d.* to 5*d.* per pound. In England the same sugar would cost more than double that sum. Excellent brown sugar may be purchased in the island at the rate of three pounds for twelve Jersey pence. The best black tea procurable in Europe, is to be had for 3 or 4 shillings a

pound, and very drinkable black tea at 2 shillings, Jersey money, that is 24 Jersey pence, or one and ten pence English. Cognac brandy is from 4*s.* to 7*s.* per gallon. Hollands 3*s.* and 6*d.* per gallon. Jamaica Rum 5*s.* to 1*s.* and 6*d.* per bottle. Excellent Claret and the best Marsala is only a shilling a bottle. The finest port (not the very oldest) sells at 24 or 25 shillings a dozen. Sherry is sold at the same rate. Vin Ordinaire is from 6*s.* to 10*s.* Champagne from 50*s.* to 60*s.* Millinery and other articles of clothing from France, are reasonably low in price, but not so much so, perhaps, as might be expected by the English visitor.

An Englishman accustomed to groan and grumble under the weight of British taxation, ought to be delighted to find in Jersey that the tax-gatherer never darkens his doors, and that he may go all over the island on excellent roads without meeting with a single turnpike gate. As there are no taxes on horses or wheels, the cost of keeping a conveyance is extremely trifling. The expense of a horse (not including the wages of a groom) is from 16 to 20 pounds a year.

A small family may be very comfortably supported in Jersey on £400 per annum. The extreme cheapness of provisions renders it an easy matter for a man, with a very limited income, to maintain a cheerful intercourse with society by means of small evening parties. An entertainment that would cost the host 20*l.* in England, would not cost him more than 6*l.* or 8*l.* in Jersey. A man might *rusticate* in some obscure village in England, away from all decent society, and without any of the elegant pleasures of life, upon nearly the same income as an Englishman in Jersey, but he could not on the same terms be surrounded with so much society and so many conveniences.

The smallness of Doctor's fees in Jersey, is a matter of congratulation to the father of a family. The physician charges only half-a-crown for each visit at your own house. House rent in Jersey is disproportionately high, and good land is far more valuable than in England. But though house rent seems high, it is to be remembered, that it includes more than the same no-

minal rent in England, as there are no rates or taxes. A genteel cottage, with a little patch of garden ground, lets at from £25 to £35 British per annum, and a commodious and elegant residence with an extensive garden at from £50 to £100. A hundred pounds is considered a large sum for a house in Jersey for a single year, and there are not many houses in the island that are let at so high a rent. The wages of English servants (and Jersey servants are not easily persuaded to leave their employment in native families) are as high as in London, and unfortunately they are not amongst the best specimens of English domestics. Washing is done by contract at the rate of 13 pieces, large and small, for the shilling. In England, the washing of a shirt costs four pence. The Schools of Jersey are extremely good, but not a great deal cheaper than in England.

From the above particulars, the reader may form a pretty accurate judgment of the amount of income that would be necessary to his comfort during a residence in Jersey.

The only disadvantages of life in Jersey that occur to me at this moment writing, are the want of new books for perusal (the purchase of them through an agent in London being too costly a pleasure for the private purse of a strict economist) and the dearth of public amusements, and the sense of weariness, and the want of excitement, which must accordingly be experienced by men without that daily employment for the mind to which they have been long accustomed. Then there is neither hunting, nor shooting, nor fishing—and to many persons the deprivation of these pleasures would be quite intolerable.

The advantages, on the other hand, are numerous and important, especially to the Anglo-Indian of moderate means. At an evening party, he can almost fancy himself in India again, for so numerous are the retired Indians in the Island, that it is almost impossible for him to mix in the smallest assemblage of British residents without meeting with old Indian friends or associates. The distance between London and St. Helier is so short, that there is no feeling of exile induced by the residence out of England. The new steamer, the *Wonder*, now runs be-

tween St. Helier and Southampton in eight hours, and there is a regular communication between these towns three times a week.

The climate of Jersey is agreeable and healthful. It was said in Camden's time, that the air was so salubrious, that there was no need of a physician. A Jersey winter is generally so extremely mild that Geraniums have grown uninjured in the open air throughout the whole season. The lovers of natural scenery cannot fail to be delighted with the island. Even when the leaves have fallen, the trees have a green and cheerful look, the trunks and some of the boughs being generally covered with ivy, "never sear." Snug cottages and the banks of trim hedges are often enveloped in the same lovely and enduring mantle. The island is richly verdant and highly cultivated. Its 40,000 acres are divided into innumerable small fields and apple orchards intersected by white lines of winding roads, the most romantic lanes, thickly over-arched with foliage, and narrow sparkling rills of the purest water. Its coast is indented with some of the most beautiful bays and inlets that ever charmed a poet's eye. It is true that they are chiefly on a miniature scale, but they are perhaps not the less interesting on that account, for though small they are exceedingly romantic and picturesque; and the richness of the trees, which in some places rise up almost at the water's edge, or thrust their green limbs from hollow cliffs; the grotesque wildness of the rocks, washed by the milky spray; the perfect solitude, disturbed at rare intervals by the fisherman stretching his nets upon the beach, or the shepherd boy watching his flock upon the over-hanging hill; and the solemn silence, broken only by the murmuring sea-wave, excite emotions in the breast of the lonely visitor far more exquisite, though less powerful and tumultuous, than would be raised by landscapes of greater extent, or of a sublimer character.

There are no vast mountains in Jersey that lift their gray heads to the clouds, but let the eye turn which way it will there are glimpses of the broad bright sea, and gently swelling hills,

and long rivulet-watered vallies of unrivalled richness and variety, and level meadows that would look as though they were cultivated only to be admired, if their living tints of gold and green and silver were not heightened by the sleek and beautifully spotted cattle, that stand knee-deep in the cool, fresh, glittering pasture. Nor are there wanting romantic ruins in solitary places, or venerable churches, or clean and cheerful villages, or spots hallowed by historical associations.

On the small islet in the beautiful bay of St. Aubin, which has been compared (though it is on a very much smaller scale) to the Bay of Naples, rises gloriously from an eternal rock, the imposing structure called *Elizabeth Castle.* It was in this ancient edifice that Clarendon resided for two years, during which he wrote the largest part of his History of the Civil Wars. On a lofty eminence, projecting sea-ward, and commanding a wide and noble prospect of land and water, stands "Mont Orgueil Castle," which is connected with many an historical tradition and poetic tale. It was in this castle that Charles the Second resided for some time, during the hostility to his dynasty in England, and a bastion from whence he used to look across the sea to the peninsula of Normandy is still named *King Charles' Out-look.* There is a miserable cell in the same castle, in which a famous man, a very different character from that of the merry monarch, the puritanical and thrice-pilloried Prynne, was confined, after the loss of both his ears. Prynne wrote a description of the castle in verse, "interlaced with brief meditations upon its rocky steep and lofty situation."

To see the beauties of Jersey to the best advantage, the lover of nature should resign the luxury of the easy-rolling carriage, and trust his own limbs to carry him through seldom frequented fields. He will be richly rewarded for his trouble,—he will almost momentarily come upon lovely patches of scenery, that are secrets to the high-road traveller, and he will be astonished to find such an endless variety of exquisite prospects within the compass of so small an Island.

AN EDITORIAL ON JERSEY.

[While conducting the *Jersey Times* the objections of some discontented British Residents were occasionally brought to my notice. The following is one of my editorial replies to British grumblers. Were Jersey a perfect paradise, it would yet fail to give unqualified satisfaction—especially to some of my fastidious countrymen.]

MAN is a discontented animal; and of all grumblers John Bull is the loudest and the most unreasonable. When he is in his own land he envies every man who leaves it—when he is abroad he is home-sick. His present locality is always the worst in the world. Any change, he thinks, must inevitably be for the better. And so he wanders restlessly and fretfully from one country to another, in search of that happiness which, as Pope says, is every where to be found, or no where. He goes from Dan to Beersheba, and exclaims, that all is barren. Milton's Devil, to give him his due, has spoken the truth :—

> The mind is its own place, and in itself
> Can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven.

Now when we hear a British Resident loud in his complaints of Jersey, we always feel vehemently disposed to cross-examine him, and thereby discover his turn of mind. We are tempted to inquire whether he ever liked any other spot of land, while actually residing on it for any length of time. This is an essential bit of knowledge, if we wish to judge fairly of the value of his opinion. He may be a very clever man, and a very honest, and yet, from a certain idiosyncracy of mind, or from some peculiarity of condition, be quite incapable of arriving at an accurate decision upon the comparative merits of two different countries. Take the case of an old Indian Officer on his return from exile. We have heard many a *Qui hye* in England, talk with tears in his eyes, of the delights of India, who very emphatically cursed the country and its inhabitants every day of his life, dur-

ing a residence there of nearly half a century. Such a man speaks bitterly of the change in English manners that has taken place during his long exile. But England is what she was. It is *he* who has changed.

To satisfy John Bull by his home fire-side is difficult indeed—to satisfy him abroad is impossible. On his foreign travels he hates all countries but his own—and he hates *that* when he returns :

> The wish to please him, vain on every plan,
> Himself must work that wonder—if he can !

He carries about with him a mental eye-glass, which discolours and distorts all near objects, and gives a charming tinge and color to the distance—to every thing beyond his reach.

If a stranger enquire of a man in London or elsewhere acquainted with this island, whether it is a cheap and pleasant place of residence, it is nineteen chances to one that he will receive an answer in the affirmative. If he come to Jersey, he will, probably, hear a different tale. Wherever men settle in expectation of some particular advantage, the majority of those who have settled there before them with the same object, are full of their disappointments, and inform the new residents, that they have come to the wrong place. They should have gone to such and such a town or country —— the very place that would have suited them ! This provoking intelligence always comes a day too late.

What with the natural discontentedness of the majority of mankind, the narrow, one-sided views of some people, and the thoughtlessness or stupidity of others, it is rare thing, indeed, to meet with an individual whose advice in the choice of a place of residence is worth a straw ; and yet in most cases when people are recommended to make an important move, they are quite satisfied to act upon such advice, if their adviser has been himself upon the recommended spot, and speaks from personal experience : as if no other advantage were, in the least degree, necessary to secure an unerring decision. A person who has ample means of locomotion need not trust reports and be hurried into

blunders. He may judge for himself with due deliberation, and with his own eyes; but the greater number of those who are in search of a cheap abode are compelled to listen to the opinions of others; because if they were to hunt about the world for a place to live in, and try first one place and then another, they would soon exhaust their means of living any where. They are, accordingly, almost always disappointed—either because nothing would satisfy their desires, or because their guides mislead them.

Our own opinion may not be worth much—it may be worth something, or nothing—just as the reader please; but as we may be expected in touching on such a subject as that before us to take openly either one side or the other, we must confess that we think Jersey decidedly a cheap and pleasant place of residence, though we sometimes hear a buz of discontent around us. We admit that if the present market prices be compared with those of ten or twenty years ago, the change will seem great and lamentable. But who caused this? The British grumblers themselves. Wherever they go, our countrymen contrive to raise the price of everything. They make a prodigious noise about economy, and always spend more and get less for their money than other people. But though the British Residents, by their wants and their liberalities, have almost doubled the prices of most articles of food in Jersey, a large family of small means may still contrive to live in this island in greater comfort and respectability than in any part of England. The extraordinary cheapness of all exciseable articles, (so large a portion of a family's domestic expenditure in England, especially if they see much company,) the absence of all direct taxation, (with the exception of the single and trifling tax for the roads*), the low charge for washing, (no slight consideration,) the moderate terms of schools, and the convenience of passing our English shilling for thirteen Jersey pence—are, taken altogether, such advantages, as make all talk about the greater cheapness of living in England, quite unreasonable and ridiculous. It is true that if a man be willing to pass the life of a hermit, away from gay cities and social

* Paid, I believe, by house proprietors only.

circles, and cut himself off from most of the comforts, elegancies, and enjoyments of civilised life, and deny himself even a glass of wine, to cheer him in his solitude, he may light upon some wild and secluded spot in England, where he may have a larger house for £20 per annum, than he could get here for £30, and may obtain, perhaps, meat and butter for a penny a pound cheaper than in the Jersey market:—and, moreover, we will admit, that, putting all things together, he may, possibly, even live upon as small an income in his hermitage in England, as in the busy and pleasant town of St. Helier. But we would defy him to live in equal comfort, elegance, and enjoyment, on the same pecuniary means. With the income on which a man with a family must *rusticate* in England, he can lead a town life in Jersey.—*Jersey Times, January* 26, 1844.

JERSEY.

[*From the Bengal Hurkaru, March* 30, 1844.]

Whilst some of our readers are thinking about a sojourn in the Far-West, we would persuade them to peruse an article, which will be found in another part of our paper, extracted from the *Jersey Times*, and written, if we mistake not, by our old friend, D. L. R. We happen to know something about the island of Jersey; and we willingly bear testimony to the truth of all that is asserted in this extract. We could say a good deal more in favor of the island, if we had leisure to follow our inclinations. Jersey is unquestionably *an admirable place of residence for people with small incomes.* It is well adapted to old Indians, for the climate is milder and less variable than that of England. Luxuries are to be obtained at a far cheaper rate than in the mother island, for the ports of Jersey and Guernsey are open to the produce of all parts of the world. The English society consists principally of half-pay officers, naval and military, with a fair scattering of retired Indian officers. Education is cheap and tolerably good, and as to the Island itself it is what perhaps D. L. R. would call the "Gem of the Occidental seas," for assuredly in no part of the world is so much variously beautiful scenery to be found within so small a space. Of course there are drawbacks, as in all other places. The laws are defective; the police of the Island bad; and occasionally disreputable characters, high and low, find their way over in the steamers, and carry on their avocations at the expense of the more virtuous portion of the community. But what of this? If a man expects to find every thing he desires, he is sure to be disappointed wherever he goes. For our own parts, we have a strong feeling in favour of Jersey, as a cheap and a pleasant place of residence.

REMARKS ON THE POETRY OF WORDSWORTH.

A FEW years ago, it would have been a work of supererrogation to notice those defects of Wordsworth which render it impossible for a true critic to elevate him to the very highest seat in the temple of the Muses. But Wordsworth's position as an author is greatly changed, and Jeffrey's critique on the *Excursion* is now generally referred to as an illustration of the blindness of reviewers to the merits of poets whose works are new or unpopular. That critique, however, with some defects, had nevertheless great merit. It was honest and sagacious. Though the fantastic puerilities of the poet were severely ridiculed, his better qualities were, at the same time, most liberally acknowledged, and most amply and judiciously illustrated with favorable specimens. But if we are to believe the criticism of the present day, Wordsworth is almost a faultless writer. As it was formerly the fashion to *run him down*, it is now the fashion to *run him up*; and as the mob of cuckoo critics once recognized his defects alone, they now see nothing but his beauties. Perhaps, therefore, an attempt to speak of him as he is, nothing extenuating nor setting down aught in malice, may not be ill-timed or unacceptable.

Wordsworth has passed his life in rural retirement. His home is a hermitage. Though this sort of life is favorable to self-reflection or learned research, or abstract reasoning, or metaphysical speculation, it is ill calculated for the poet who is ambitious to describe human life, and to make men's familiar associations the subject of his verse. A daily communion with still lakes, and misty mountains, and waving trees, and gentle waterfalls, may qualify a poet to describe with accuracy the peculiarities of external nature; but Wordsworth aims at something better than

a mere representation of land and water. "Pure description," he well knows, should rather constitute the ornament, than the main character or material of a poem of lofty pretension. No sound critic, nor any poet of true genius, has adopted the narrow theory of Darwin, that poetry is all picture, and nothing else. It is not to be denied, that when images of inanimate nature are associated with rich fancies and profound meditation, they become exquisite material for the poet's art; and there are poets of no ordinary excellence who have confined their genius to such sources of inspiration. Wordsworth is one of these. He is, unquestionably, a *true* poet, though he has no claim to be regarded as a poet of the first rank, because he has exhibited no power in the highest departments of his art.

As a meditative and descriptive poet, he has no living equal. But his thoughts and pictures would never place him by the side of the four great poets who stand at the head of English poetical literature—namely Chaucer, Spenser, Shakspeare, and Milton. These were not merely rural painters or recluse philosophers; nor were they egotistical echoes of themselves. Their creations were not all after their own image. They mixed freely with their fellow-creatures, they beheld the workings of the human heart in great cities, and under those states of tumultuous excitement, when the most secret traits of character are developed; they sympathized with all classes and conditions of men, and learned how to pourtray emotions different from their own, and to communicate their original conceptions to the minds of others. There is a largeness of mind, and a versatility of power, and a truth and extent of insight indicated in the works of these mighty poets, which we look for in vain in the retired and fantastical theorist of the Lakes, who, when he turns from natural images and attempts to pourtray human nature, exhibits, under the rags of a Cumberland pedlar, the solemn William Wordsworth. Lord Byron was not far wrong, after all, when he spoke contemptuously of the *Excursion*. It is garrulous egotism—it is egotism in disguise, for it pretends to something of a dramatic character; but we never lose sight of the poet.

In spite of occasional passages of pure and beautiful sentiment, of gentle pathos, of depth of thought, and of a felicity of description unequalled by any other poet of these times, the poem is inexpressibly tedious, from its minuteness of detail, and its general feebleness and verbosity.

The most prominent defects of Wordsworth's genius indicate, apparently, a certain one-sidedness of mind—(the result of his recluse life)—and a sort of arrogant self-sufficiency that no writer in the English language has dared to exhibit to so great an extent or in so barefaced a manner. Most poets select their best efforts for the public eye, and do not imagine that they are equally, at all hours, under the inspiration of the muse. A poet is not always a poet. He has his prosaic side, and his moments of ordinary thought and feeling, when he is in no degree distinguishable from other men. But Wordsworth writes at all times and under all conditions, and seems to fancy that all he writes is of equal value. He, therefore, takes no pains to select or condense his images and thoughts. Instead of making a careful selection of his best ideas in their best form, he frequently presents us with the very dregs of his daily life, and with an air of as much emphasis and solemnity as if it were the concentrated essence of his noblest inspiration. The least hint that these careless or infelicitous effusions of the prose part of his nature are inferior to the best productions of his best hours, is received with a burst of scorn and indignation. Because the public laughed at his Peter Bell, and his Betty Foy, and Goody Blake, and Harry Gill, he wrote an elaborate essay to prove the monstrous position, that no true poet could possibly be popular in his life-time.

Of the style in which he speaks of himself, and of his critics—"men of palsied imaginations and indurated hearts"—the following paragraph from one of his prefaces, is an amusing example :—

And if, bearing in mind the many poets distinguished by this prime quality (imagination,) whose names I omit to mention ; yet justified by a recollection of the insults which the Ignorant, the Incapable, and the Presumptuous have heaped upon these and my other writings, I may be permitted to

anticipate the judgment of posterity upon myself; I shall declare (censurable, I grant, if the notoriety of the fact above stated does not justify me) that I have given, in these unfavorable times, evidence of exertions of this faculty upon its worthiest objects, the external universe, the moral and religious sentiments of man, his natural affections and acquired passions; which have the same ennobling tendency as the productions of men, in this kind, worthy to be holden in undying remembrance.

From the concluding sentence of the above extract, the reader would imagine, that a poet who could thus perform the part of his own trumpeter, would hardly care much for the assaults of his enemies; but the passionate and bitter scorn—(a clear proof that the author's withers are not unwrung)—with which he treats "the Ignorant, the Incapable and the Presumptuous," who have dared to laugh at the Lyrical Ballads, compels us to acknowledge, that extreme self-satisfaction is not always an impenetrable coat of armour against the hostility of critics.*

It may now be as well, perhaps, to quote specimens of the sort of poetry which Wordsworth thinks it prudent to publish, and infamous to censure. Here is a poem which, we suppose according to the author, is "worthy to be holden in undying remembrance." We give it entire:—

ANECDOTE FOR FATHERS,

Showing how the practice of Lying may be taught.

I have a boy of five years old,
His face is fair and fresh to see
His limbs are cast in beauty's mould
And dearly he loves me.

One morn we strolled on our dry walk,
Our quiet home all full in view,
And held such intermitted talk
As we were wont to do.

* Lord Jeffrey, by his critique on the *Excursion*, has sunk the character of Scottish criticism to a state of the lowest degradation in the eyes of Wordsworth, who now speaks of Scotland as "*a soil to which this sort of weed* (a bad critic) *seems natural.*"

My thoughts on former pleasures ran
I thought of Kilve's delightful shore,
Our pleasant home when Spring began
A long long year before.

A day it was when I could bear
To think, and *think*, and *think* again ;
With so much happiness to spare
I could not feel a pain.

My Boy was by my side, so slim
And graceful in his rustic dress,
And oftentimes I talked to him
In very idleness.

The young lambs ran a pretty race,
The morning sun shone bright and warm,
" Kilve," said I, " was a pleasant place
And so is Liswyn farm ?

" And tell me had you rather be"
I said, *and held held him by the arm*,
" At Kilve's smooth shore, by the green sea,
Or here at Liswyn farm ?"

In careless mood, he looked at me
Whilst *still I held him by the arm*,
And said " At Kilve I'd rather be
Than here at Liswyn farm."

" *Now, little Edward, say why so ?*
My little Edward, tell me why ?—
" *I cannot tell, I do not know*"—
" Why this is strange," said I !

" For here are woods and green hills warm :
There surely must some reason be
Why you would change sweet Liswyn farm
For Kilve by the green sea."

At this my Boy hung down his head,
He blushed with shame, nor made reply,
And *five* times to the child I said
" Why, Edward, tell me why ?"

His head he raised; there was in sight—
It caught his eye, he saw it plain—
Upon the house-top, glittering bright,
A broad and gilded vane.

Then did the boy his tongue unlock,
And thus to me he made reply
"At Kilve there was no weathercock,
And that's the reason why."

Oh dearest, dearest Boy! my heart
For better lore would seldom yearn,
Could I but teach the hundredth part
Of what from thee I learn.*

The needless repetition, of the simple fact, that the father, in speaking to his son, *held him by the arm*—the importance attached to a child's attempt to explain the grounds of its preference of one place to another, or to get rid of an idle and importunate question—and the emphatic and exaggerated moral, in which the poet pretends that he learns a hundred times more from the pestered boy's reply, than he (the poet) with all his philosophy could teach, is peculiarly characteristic of Wordsworth's worst style when he aims at a sort of innocent simplicity of manner, combined with profound sagacity of thought, and produces an effect that is, in reality, supremely fantastic, unnatural and ridiculous.

Every thing that Wordsworth sees—every thing that occurs to him—the most vulgar sights, the most trivial incidents, assume, to his own mind, a degree of importance that is utterly incomprehensible to men in general. He meets a beggar woman and her brats in his morning walk. He must inform posterity of it. He carefully records in verse, a fact which is to be held in "undying remembrance," that she wore a long drab-coloured cloak, a white cap on her head and a mantle reaching to her

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* What is it that the poet learns? and in what way does the poem show (according to the title) *how the practise of lying may be taught?* Landor asks, "if the lad told a lie, why praise him so? and if he spoke the obvious truth, what has he taught the father?"

feet, but conscientiously confesses that he "could not know" (that is without an indecorous enquiry or examination) what sort of garment was under the mantle. But let us give the whole affair, and as Wordsworth boasts that all his poems have *a purpose*, perhaps some one will point out to us the purpose of this one. At present, it is as much a secret to us as the gipsey's under-garment.

BEGGARS.

1.

She had a tall's man's height, or more;
No bonnet screened her from the heat;
A large drab-colored cloak she wore,
A mantle reaching to her feet,
What other dress she had, I could not know;
Only she wore a cap that was as white as snow.

2.

In all my walks, through field or town,
Such figure I had never seen,
Her face was of Egyptian brown:
Fit person was she for a Queen,
To head those ancient Amazonian files:
Or ruling bandit's Wife, among the Greecian Isles.*

3.

Before me begging did she stand,
Pouring out sorrows like a sea;
Grief after grief;—on English land,
Such woe I knew could never be;
And yet a boon I gave her; for the creature
Was beautiful to see; "a Weed of glorious feature?"

4.

I left her, and pursued my way,
And soon before me did espy
A pair of little boys at play,
Chasing a crimson butterfly;
The latter followed with his hat in hand,
Wreathed round with yellow flowers, the gayest of the land.

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* This stanza is an exception to the rest of the poem. It is rather poetical.

5.

The other wore a rimless crown
With leaves of laurel stuck about:
And they both followed up and down,
Each whooping with a merry shout:
In their paternal features I could trace
Unquestionable lines of that wild suppliant's face.

6.

They bolted on me thus, and lo!
Each ready with a plaintive whine;
Said I, "Not half an hour ago
Your mother has had alms of mine."
"That cannot be," one answered; "she is dead."
"Nay but I gave her pence, and she will buy you bread!"

7.

"She has been dead, Sir, many a day:"
"Sweet boys you're telling me a lie;
It was your Mother as I say—"
And in the twinkling of an eye
"Come, come!" cried one, and without more ado,
Off to some other play they both together flew.

"I cannot," says Wordsworth, in one of his Prefaces, "be insensible of the present outcry against the triviality and meanness both of thought and language, which *some of my contemporaries (!!)* have occasionally introduced into their metrical compositions; and I acknowledge that this defect, where it exists, is more dishonorable to the writer's own character than false refinement or arbitrary innovation, though I should contend, at the same time, that it is far less pernicious in the sum of its consequences. From such verses, the poems in this volume will be found distinguished, at least by one mark of difference, that each of them has a worthy *purpose.*" *The outcry against some of his contemporaries for triviality and meanness!* This is rich, indeed. Is there any modern poet, who has been so assailed with universal ridicule for this very fault, as Wordsworth himself, or who has so keenly felt or so loudly complained of the objection? To a charge of triviality and meanness too many of his lyrical ballads most justly exposed him, though

some few of them are, undoubtedly, amongst the most beautiful little poems in the language.

There is a fault in Wordsworth that has not, perhaps, been noticed by the critics, but must have been often felt by the reader, which is a trick of inserting prosaic matter, or qualifying clauses, in the midst of passages intended to be elevated and poetical. The following are examples. With a very little trouble, a thousand more might be selected from the pages of the same writer :—

My father was a good and pious man,
An honest man by honest parents bred,
And *I believe that*, soon as I began
To lisp, he made me kneel beside my bed,
And in his hearing there my prayers I said.

O happy time of youthful lovers (*thus*
My story may begin) O balmy time,
In which a love-knot on a lady's brow
Is fairer than the fairest star in heaven!

——————— It seemed a day
(*I speak of one from many singled out)*
One of those heavenly days which cannot die.

And in our vacant mood,
Not seldom did we stop to watch some tuft
Of dandelion seed or thistle's beard,
That skimmed the surface of the dead calm lake,
Suddenly halting now—a lifeless stand!
And starting off again with freak as sudden,
In all its sportive wanderings, all the while
Making report of an invisible breeze
That was its wings, its chariot, and its horse,
Its playmate—*rather say* its moving soul.

Thou
Art pacing to and fro the vessel's deck
In some far region. Here, while o'er my head,
At every impulse of the moving breeze
The fir-grove murmurs, with a sea-like sound,
Alone I tread this path; *for aught I know,*
Timing my steps to thine.

—— The intended pile, which would have been
Some quaint odd plaything of elaborate skill,
So that, *I guess*, the linnet and the thrush,
And other little builders who dwell here,
Had wondered at the work.

Yet further—many, I believe, there are
Who live a life of virtuous decency:
Men who can hear the Decalogue, and feel
No self-reproach.

EPITAPH.

Not without heavy grief did he
On whom the duty fell *(for at that time
The father sojourned in a distant land,)*
Deposit in the hollow of this Tomb
A brother's child, most tenderly beloved!

THE FLOWER OF LOVE LIES BLEEDING.

E'en thus stoops
(Sentient by Grecian sculpture's marvellous power)
Thus leans, with hanging brow and body bent
Earthward, in uncomplaining languishment
The dying gladiator. Lo, sad flower!
*('Tis Fancy guides me willing to be led,
Though by a slender thread.)*
So drooped Adonis, bathed in sanguine dew,
Of his death wound.

The book which in my hand
Had opened of itself *(for it was swollen
With searching damp, and seemingly had lain
To the injurious elements exposed
From week to week)* I found to be a work
In the French tongue, a novel of Voltaire—
His famous Optimist.

These prosaic *asides** and cool explanations, give a check to

* They remind us of Bentley's prosaic alterations of Milton:

Original.

Our torments also may, in length of time,
Become our elements.

Improved by Bentley.

Then, *as was well observed*, our torments may
Become our elements.

the reader's emotion, and create an impression that the author himself is not in earnest. In almost any other writer, we should attribute the fault to an essentially unpoetical temperament, and even in his case, it certainly indicates a want of passion. He has rather too much command over his own feelings to be always sure of carrying the reader with him; and on this account nothing can be less effective than some of his Odes. Nature never intended him for a lyrical or a dramatic poet.

In the course of his travels, Wordsworth happens to meet a gaily-dressed negro woman in a coach. She had been "driven" from France:—this the poor outcast "did declare" to the poet, and the poet "did" think it necessary to declare the same to the public:—

SONNET.

We had a fellow passenger who came
From Calais with us, gaudy in array,—
A negro woman like a lady gay,
Yet silent as a woman fearing blame;
Dejected, meek, yea pitiably tame:
She sate, from notice turning not away,
But on our proffered kindness still did lay
A weight of languid speech,—or at the same
Was silent, motionless in eyes and face.
She was a negro woman driven from France,
Rejected, like all others of that race,
Not one of whom may now find footing there;
This the poor outcast did to us declare,
Nor murmured at the unfeeling ordinance.

This feeble, common-place, matter-of-fact statement has no claim to be called poetry, nor should it be called a sonnet. It is "a weight of languid speech." Of all poems, the sonnet demands the most finish and compression. The termination, though it need not be absolutely pointed or epigrammatic, ought to satisfy the ear and mind with a sense of completeness; the music and the sentiment ought to be brought to a close, so correspondent and entire, that the reader should have no reason to suppose that the poet has left any thing unsaid which it was his intention to say. The sonnet is not like

a single stanza out of its place and requiring a successor. It is, or ought to be, complete in itself. A thought, or image, or incident, which cannot, without injury, be compressed within the limits of the sonnet, should be embodied in some other form of verse. The substance of a sonnet, like that of an egg, should exactly occupy the space allotted to it. Wordsworth's sonnets, admirable as many of them are, have been the subject of very indiscriminate laudation amongst the critics of the day. They are, too often, so feeble, and prosaic, and imperfect, that, if offered *anonymously* as contributions to the very periodicals which praise them with so much enthusiasm, they would be rejected with contempt. Perhaps about ten or a dozen in each centenary are as fine, or even finer, than any in the language ; but the rest, unhappily, are conspicuous failures, being deficient in elevation, strength, unity, purpose, and compactness.

Wordsworth's matchless self-complacency renders it quite impossible for him to undertake the difficult task of self-criticism. What a blessing, therefore, it would be to this most unequal writer, and not less to himself than to the public, if he could be persuaded to submit all his performances to the unsparing pruning-knife of some judicious friend! Wordsworth's blank-verse is often quite as defective as his worst sonnets. It is wanting in some of the essential qualities of that noble measure. Mere prose, even elegant prose, divided by the printer into lines of ten syllables without rhyme, is not blank-verse. Here and there a line may be admitted into good blank-verse, that would not be out of its place in good prose ; but the general character of the versification ought not to resemble a prose tale or essay ; for though elevation or beauty or force of thought and imagery may confer true dignity on very simple and colloquial diction, there are, in every long poem, certain subordinate or connecting passages that are necessarily somewhat undertoned, and require, in the case of blank-verse, considerable compression, great variety in the music, some degree of inversion, and some strength and firmness of movement, to sustain its character, and rescue and distinguish it from mere

prose. But Wordsworth pours himself out with such a "fatal facility," and is so easily pleased with his own performances, that no true poet before him has ever written so much plain prose in measured syllables. This accounts for the extraordinary and tedious length of his *Excursion*, which forms only a portion of a poem entitled *The Recluse*. If a poet once take it into his head that all he thinks, and feels, and does, and all he writes and publishes is of equal dignity and equal interest and value, he may very soon produce waggon-loads of verse, very easy to write, but very hard to read. Let his genius, however, be what it may, posterity will be apt to fling aside the entire ponderous cargo with disgust and scorn. It will never take the trouble to hunt through vast quartos of versified prose for occasional passages of even the most resplendent merit, nor, in the crowded vehicle of fame, give place to a traveller, who packs up his goods, however precious, in vast, unwieldy bales of straw and cotton. These remarks are not to be applied in their full force to Wordsworth in particular, but are meant to support a general principle, against which, however, he has too often sinned in a manner that cannot but grieve all those of his admirers whose adherence is of value. As I do not wish to weary the reader with unfavorable quotations, but a single specimen shall be given of the sort of prose in verse to which Wordsworth ventures to give the name of poetry, and to publish as worthy of his high and unquestionable genius.

> Thus in his Father's sight the Boy grew up:
> And now when he had reached his eighteenth year,
> He was his comfort and his daily hope.
> *While in this sort* the simple household lived
> From day to day, to Michael's ear there came
> Distressful tidings. Long before the time
> Of which I speak, the shepherd had been bound
> In surety for this brother's son, a man
> Of an industrious life and ample means.
> But unforeseen misfortunes suddenly
> Had pressed upon him,—and old Michael now
> Was summoned to discharge the forfeiture,
> A grievous penalty, but little less
> Than half his substance.

* * * * * *

There's Richard Bateman, thought she to herself:
He was Parish boy—at the Church door
They made a gathering for him, shillings and pence,
And half-pennies, wherewith the neighbours bought
A basket which they filled with pedlar's wares,
And with the basket on his arm, the lad
Went up to London, found a master there,
Who out of many chose the trusty boy
To go and overlook his merchandize
Beyond the seas: where he grew wondrous rich
And left estates and monies to the poor,
And at his birth-place built a chapel floored
With marble, which he sent from foreign lands.
These thoughts, and *many others of like sort,*
Passed quickly through the mind of Isabel.
Her countenance brightened. The old man was glad,
And thus resumed:—Well, Isabel! this scheme
These two days has been meat and drink to me.

This diffuse and feeble versified prose affords an illustration of a characteristic fault in Wordsworth. He takes too much notice of non-essentials. He is too fond of such minute explanations and familiar details as may properly be included in a plain prose narrative, but which are quite out of place in poetical composition. Poetry is truth—but it is not *all* truth that is poetry. It may tell of the loss or acquisition of a fortune, and the consequent emotion of grief or joy; but it does not present an account-current to the reader.

When Wordsworth wrote his lyrical ballads, he was wedded to his theory about simplicity in sentiment and diction; but his very anxiety to arrive at the end in view defeated his purpose. A predetermined simplicity in poetry is apt to end like preconcerted wit in conversation—in affectation and disappointment. Men who write naturally, do so without an effort. Shakspeare and Burns have never been surpassed in strokes of simple nature, but they had no theory to support, and did not require to write learned essays to prove that their simplicity was genuine. They had not to complain that men ridiculed or disdained their verses, or that their critics were persons of "palsied imagination

and indurated hearts." Their simplicity shocks no man, and is felt and appreciated by every reader of ordinary capacity and unsophisticated taste. When the critics of the day attempt to support the claims of the poet of simple nature by metaphysical speculation and elaborate and ingenious theories, they indirectly condemn their client. Their praise is the severest satire. They boast that it is only the gifted few who can understand the poet, who yet pretends to have "fitted to metrical arrangement the real language of men in a state of vivid sensation."

Wordsworth commenced his career as a poet with a theory about simplicity, which in practise he carried to an extreme that called down upon him for many years incessant showers of ridicule and sarcasm. He might possibly have continued to this day to pour forth his favorite absurdities with a grave and majestic air of untroubled self-complacency, if he had not been at last weaned from such infantile associations by the example of some of the most eminent of his contemporaries, who rushed into those cloudy regions of mystical philosophy, which for some years past, have been regarded as the only legitimate haunt of the muses. The most obstinate and self-dependent genius is more or less affected by the spirit of his age and the manners of those who exercise their powers in the same department of art or science. Though Wordsworth began by writing for little children, in a style *caviare* to the mature mind, he now addresses his poetry to the subtlest metaphysicians, and in a tone the most pompous and consequential. He now too condescends to use those ordinary ornaments and that conventional phraseology which he originally rejected with so much disdain. In his more ambitious blank-verse productions, he is quite as stilted as Akenside himself, while in his smaller rhymed poems, he uses all the common artifices of versification. The dissimilarities of style and in quality of merit in the various works of this writer are quite surprizing. We find a triviality and meanness of subject and treatment contrasted with the most solemn lessons of the philosopher, and the most homely diction with the most ambitious. These inconsistencies can only be reconciled or understood by a

study of the history and character of Wordsworth's mind, with a constant reference to the changes that have come over the literature of the period. His works themselves, if perused without the light which is to be derived from this study and reference, would puzzle the most discerning critic, who should wish to form a clear conception of the writer's genius.

It is not true that what is called the real language of men in vulgar life is the fittest for poetry, but even if it were true, Wordsworth's practise would not support his theory, for no rustic thinks and speaks in real life like rustics in the pages of Wordsworth. His simplicity is not the simplicity of a flesh and blood ploughman, nor do we meet in real life with such a philosophical pedlar as he has chosen for the hero of the *Excursion.* Milton's language is not the language of common life. Even the simplicity of Burns and Shakspeare—though so much nearer to real life than Wordsworth's—is not identically that of the vulgar. It is not a literal report of men's actual words. It has not the sort of truth which is looked for in a book like Wright's *Mornings in Bow-street.* So long as the feeling is given, the poet is not anxious to preserve errors and peculiarities of grammar and pronunciation. He is not disposed to give a picture of things barely as they are. His imagination tinges the humblest objects, as the sun touches with hues of glory the most worthless weed, or the stump of an old tree. The muse

Turns
Bodies to spirit by sublimation strange.

We feel that there is an essential difference between the language of poetry and that of prose, though it is difficult to define it. Poetical words at once kindle poetical associations—prosaic words bring down the mind to matters of fact. Let a common rustic and a highly educated man be called upon to describe a scene in nature, or an event connected with human emotion, and which would give us the most true and therefore poetical statement? Assuredly not the first. The rustic's ideas are narrow and confused, and his vocabulary limited and mean.

But enough of Wordsworth's defects. It is an unpleasing

task to notice them. Let us now turn to the brighter side of the picture. Though Wordsworth is not in the first rank of British poets, he is undoubtedly the greatest poet of his time. He cannot take his seat by the side of Milton, but his throne is higher than that of any other living potentate of Parnassus. His poetry has not the passion of Byron, the rich dreaminess of Coleridge or Shelley, the sparkling fancy of Moore, or the energy and precision of Campbell ; but in calm depth of thought, and in the occasional production of those separate and independent lines or stanzas, which at once become an imperishable addition to the spiritual wealth of the country, he leaves them all far behind him. In his truly classical *Laodamia* there is an

Elysian beauty, melancholy grace,

which makes a great deal of our popular poetry seem miserably common-place or meretricious. Even in the too prolix *Excursion* there are passages of surpassing beauty, and it is deplorable to think how much they are hidden from the general eye by the mass of inferior matter with which they are connected. If any reader should think that we have been a little too free in some of our comments on this poet, he will not, we hope, accuse us of ill will or unfairness. To show that we have no desire to leave upon the reader's mind an unfavourable opinion of Wordsworth, we have reserved our praise for the conclusion of this critique, and follow it up with a selection of a number of the most exquisite gems that are to be found scattered over his works. It will be difficult to look at them without feeling that warm admiration towards the gifted writer which makes all critical objections seem almost equally disagreeable and impertinent. But it is the duty of criticism to point out defects as well as excellencies, for nothing is so apt to injure the taste of a nation as an indiscriminate laudation even of its best writers.

SONNET COMPOSED UPON WESTMINSTER BRIDGE.

Earth has not any thing to show more fair;
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty:
This city now doth like a garment wear
The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theatres and temples lie
Open unto the fields and to the sky;
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
Never did sun more beautifully steep
In his first splendour, valley, rock or hill;
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!
The river glideth at his own sweet will;
Dear God! the very houses seem asleep
And all that mighty heart is lying still!

THE WAGGONER IN A STORM.

The rain rushed down, the road was battered,
As with the force of billows shattered;
The horses are dismayed, nor know
Whether they should stand or go;
And Benjamin is *groping* near them,
Sees nothing and can scarcely hear them.
He is astounded,——wonder not
With such a charge in such a spot;
Astounded in the mountain gap,
By peals of thunder, clap on clap!
And many a terror-striking flash;—
And somewhere, as it seems, a crash
Among the rocks; with weight of rain,
And sullen motions, long and slow,
That to a dreary distance go——
Till breaking in upon the dying strain,
A rending o'er his head begins the fray again!

A HARE.

The hare is running races in her mirth;
And with her feet, she from the plashy earth
Raises a mist, that, glittering in the sun,
Runs with her all the way wherever she doth run.

A RILL.

——————— It *quivers* down the hill,
Furrowing its shallow way with *dubious* will.

A STORM.

——————— Untimely thunders growl;
While trees, *dim-seen*, in frenzied numbers tear
The lingering remnant of their yellow hair:
And shivering wolves, surprized with darkness, howl,
As if the sun were not.

A HAPPY WANDERER.

Love he had found in huts where poor men lie;
His daily teachers had been woods and rills,
The silence that is in the starry sky,
The sleep that is among the lonely hills.

EVENING.

It is a beauteous evening, calm and free:
The holy time is quiet as a nun
Breathless with adoration!

ANOTHER DESCRIPTION OF EVENING.

——————— While day's purple eye
Is gently closing with the flowers of spring;
When e'en the motion of an angel's wing
Would interrupt the intense tranquility
Of silent hills and more than silent sky.

POETS.

Blessings be with them and eternal praise
The Poets, who on earth have made us heirs
Of truth and pure delight, by heavenly lays!
Oh! might my name be numbered amongst theirs,
Then gladly would I end my mortal days.

CHEERFULNESS.

A cheerful life is what the Muses love,
A soaring spirit is their prime delight.

HUMAN CHANGE AND IMPERFECTION.

——————— But alas,
Vain earth! false world! Foundations must be laid
In Heaven; for midst the wreck of *Is* and *was*,
Things incomplete and purposes betrayed
Make sadder transits o'er truth's mystic glass
Than noblest objects utterly decayed.

RAPIDITY OF TIME.

——————— As a dart
Cleaves the blank air, Life flies: now every day
Is but a glimmering spoke in the swift wheel
Of the revolving week.

A POET.

And who is he, with modest looks
And clad in homely russet brown?
He murmurs by the running brooks
A music sweeter than their own.

He is retired as noontide dew,
Or fountain in a noonday grove;
And you must love him, ere to you
He will seem worthy of your love.

SPRING.

I heard a thousand blended notes,
While in a grove I sat reclined,
In that sweet mood when pleasant thoughts
Bring sad thoughts to the mind.
In her fair works did nature link
The human soul that through me ran,
And much it grieved my heart to think
What man has made of man.

THE PROGRESS OF A DARK AND TROUBLED MIND.

The intellectual power, through words and things,
Went sounding on——a dim and perilous way.

A SCENE OF MISERY.

——————— When I entered, with the hope,
Of usual greeting, Margaret looked at me
A little while, then turned her head away
Speechless, and, sitting down upon a chair,
Wept bitterly. I wist not what to do,
Or how to speak to her. Poor Wretch! At last
She rose from off her seat, and then—oh! sir,
I cannot *tell* how she pronounced my name,——
With fervent love, and with a face of grief
Unutterably helpless. ———— Evermore
Her eyelids drooped; her eyes were downward cast;
And when she at her table gave me food,
She did not look at me. Her voice was low,
Her body was subdued. In every act
Pertaining to her house affairs, appeared
The careless stillness of a thinking mind
Self-occupied; to which all outward things,
Are like an idle matter. Still she sighed,
But yet no motion of the breast was seen,
No heaving of the heart. While by the fire
We sate together, sighs came on my ear,
I knew not why, and hardly whence they came.
Her infant babe
Had from its mother caught the trick of grief,
And sighed among its playthings.

A COUNTRY GIRL.

No mate, no comrade, Lucy knew,
She dwelt on a wide moor,——
The sweetest thing that ever grew
Beside a human door?

A RETIRED BEAUTY.

A violet by a mossy stone
Half hidden from the eye,
Fair as a star, when only one
Is shining in the sky!

IMPRESSIONS LEFT ON THE MIND BY SONG AND MUSIC.

And when the stream
Which overflowed the soul, was passed away,
A consciousness remained that it had left,
Deposited upon the silent shore
Of memory, images and precious thoughts
That shall not die, and cannot be destroyed.

THE CEASELESS ROLL OF SEA-WAVES.

And see the children sporting on the shore,
And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore!

DEEP THOUGHTS.

To me the meanest simplest flowers that blow
Can raise up thoughts that lie too deep for tears.*

A BLESSED MOOD OF MIND.

That blessed mood
In which the burden of the mystery,
In which the heavy and the weary weight
Of all this unintelligible world,
Is lightened :—that serene and blessed mood
In which the affections gently lead us on,
Until the breath of this corporeal form,
And e'en the motion of our human blood
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
In body, and become a living soul :
While with an eye made quiet by the power
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things.

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* A passage in praise of poetry in the *Shepherd's Hunting* of Wither perhaps suggested the above lines.

Her divine skill taught me this,
That from every thing I saw
I could some invention draw,
And raise pleasure to the height
By the meanest objects sight;
By the murmur of a spring,
Or the least bough's rustling,
By a daisy, whose leaves spread
Shut when Titan goes to bed;
Or a shady bush or tree :—&c. &c.

It would be idle to praise such passages as these. No one who knows what poetry and thought are, need to be told that he who produced them is a poet and a thinker of no ordinary character.

THE END.

NOTES TO LITERARY CHIT-CHAT.

Page 5, line 16 from the top.

It is true that in conversation Macaulay has spoken of Southey as the greatest writer of the age, but in the review of the "Colloquies on Society" in the *Edinburgh Review*, (subsequently published in Macaulay's collected Essays,) Southey's intellectual character is treated far less indulgently. In fact it is perhaps the severest and ablest criticism of any length that Southey ever encountered.

Page 275, line 6 from the top.

Since this number of the *Literary Chit-Chat* passed through the printer's hands, I have seen Captain Medwin's life of Shelley. In quoting the "Stanzas written in dejection at Naples" Medwin makes the second stanza run as follows:—

> The sun is warm, the sky is clear,
> The waves are dancing fast and bright,
> Blue isles and snowy mountains wear
> The purple *moon's* transparent *might*:
> The breath of *the west wind* is light
> Around its unexpanded buds.

This stanza seems doomed to be the sport of editors and printers, and a puzzle to every reader.

